



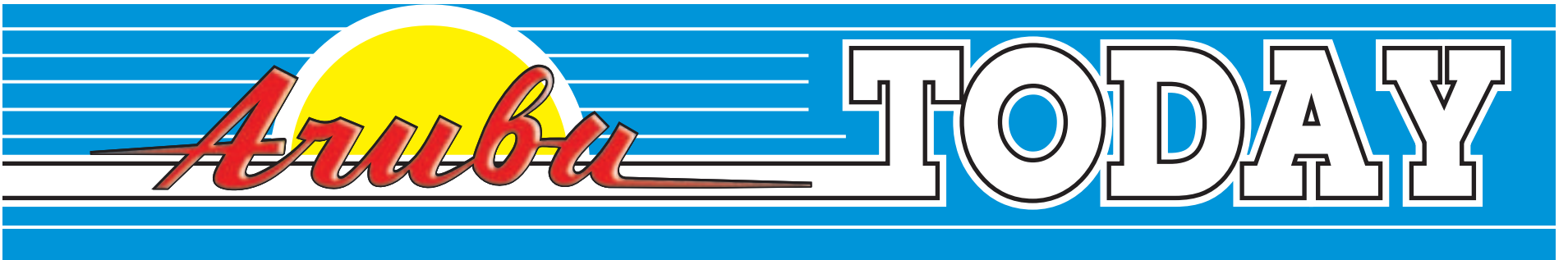
HEZBOLLAH LEADER ASSASSINATED AT HOME NEAR BEIRUT

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FOX: SUPER BOWL ADVERTISING SPACE ALREADY SOLD OUT

Page 25



On Top Of The News Email: news@arubatoday.com website: www.arubatoday.com Tel: +297 582-7800 Thursday, December 5, 2013

RADIOACTIVE LOAD FOUND

RODRIGO SOBERANES
Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — A missing shipment of radioactive cobalt-60 was found Wednesday near where the stolen truck transporting the material was abandoned in central Mexico state, the country's nuclear safety director said.



Image shows machinery that was part of the cargo in a truck stolen in Tepojaco, Hidalgo state, north of Mexico City. (AP Photo/CNSNS)

The highly radioactive material was found in an empty lot about a kilometer (a half a mile) from Hueyapoxla, an agricultural town of about 4,000 people, but it poses no threat or a need for an evacuation, said Juan Eibenschutz, director general of the National Commission of Nuclear Safety and Safeguards.

"Fortunately there are no people where the source of radioactivity is," Eibenschutz said.

The cargo truck hauling the extremely dangerous cobalt-60 that had been used in medical equipment was stolen from a gas station early Tuesday, and authorities had put out an alert looking for it.

Continued on Page 2

COLD SNAP



Abraham Asadishad, caretaker for St John's Episcopal Church, cleans the sidewalks and stairs around the church on Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2013, in Boulder, Colo. The storm dumped several inches of snow in Denver and parts of Colorado's mountains saw up to 3 feet by the end of the day. (AP Photo/The Daily Camera, Paul Aiken)

Winter Storm Blankets West, Heads East

HELENA, Mont. (AP) — A wintry storm pushing through the Rockies and Midwest is bringing bitterly cold temperatures and treacherous driving conditions blamed in at least six deaths as it threatens crops as far south as California.

The wind chill could drop to 30 degrees below zero in parts of Montana Wednesday while wind chills of minus 20 have already been recorded in the Nebraska Panhandle. Low temperatures in the Denver area were expected to drop below zero

over the next several days. The jet stream is much farther south than normal, allowing the cold air to push in from the Arctic and drop temperatures by 20 to 40 degrees below normal levels, AccuWeather meteorologist Tom Kines said.

Areas of Montana and the Dakotas were forecast to reach lows in the minus-20s, while Laramie, Wyo. is expected to see a low temperature of 28 below. The icy arctic blast was expected to be followed by another one later in the week, creating an

extended period of cold weather that hasn't been seen since the late 1990s, meteorologists said.

In California's Central Valley, temperatures dropped into the upper 20s overnight, not enough to cause any damage to citrus crops.

Citrus farmers, however, are anticipating colder temperatures overnight Wednesday and Thursday and are continuing to take precaution, said Bob Blakely, of California Citrus Mutual.

The unrelenting storm has spread about 2 feet of

snow and brought daily activities to a grinding halt in northeastern Minnesota. The heavy snow and ice has contributed to hundreds of traffic accidents around the state and was cited in at least four fatal crashes since Monday.

The storm closed the University of Minnesota Duluth and most other schools in the area and canceled holiday parties, Salvation Army bell ringing and a lutefisk dinner in Duluth, where over a foot of snow has fallen over three days.

Continued on Page 3



The National Commission on Nuclear Safety and Safeguards of Mexico's Energy Secretary website shows a message asking for help in the search for a stolen cargo truck hauling medical equipment with extremely dangerous radioactive material after it was stolen in Tepojaco, Hidalgo state, north of Mexico City.

(AP Photo/website of the CNSNS)

Hunt over in Mexico for stolen radioactive cargo

Continued from Front

Police and the military joined in the hunt.

The truck was taking the cobalt to a nuclear waste facility in the state of Mexico, which is adjacent to Mexico City.

Eibenschutz said direct exposure to cobalt-60 could result in death within a few minutes. He said hospitals near the area were asked to report if they treat anyone exposed to radioactivity.

"This is a radioactive source that is very strong," Eibenschutz told The Associated Press.

But, he added, the material poses no threat to human life if kept at least 500 yards (500 meters) away.

Eibenschutz didn't know the exact weight of cobalt, but said it was the largest amount stolen in recent memory, and the intensity of the material caused the alert.

The material was used in obsolete radiation therapy equipment that is being replaced throughout Mexico's public health system. It was coming from the general hospital in the northern border city of Tijuana, Eibenschutz said.

Before the container was found, he said the thieves most likely wanted the white 2007 Volkswagen cargo vehicle with a moveable platform and

crane.

Eibenschutz said there was nothing to indicate the theft of the cobalt was intentional or in any way intended for an act of terrorism.

The truck marked "Transportes Ortiz" left Tijuana on Nov. 28 and was headed to the storage facility when the driver stopped to rest at a gas station in Tepojaco, in Hidalgo state north of Mexico City.

The driver, Valentin Escamilla Ortiz, told authorities he was sleeping in the truck when two men with a gun approached about 1:30 a.m. Tuesday. They made him get out, tied his hands and feet and left him in a vacant lot nearby.

When he was able to free himself, he ran back to the gas station to get help. On average, a half dozen thefts of radioactive materials are reported in Mexico each year and none have proven to be aimed at the cargo, Eibenschutz said. He said that in all the cases the thieves were after shipping containers or the vehicles.

Unintentional thefts of radioactive materials are not uncommon, said an official familiar with cases reported by International Atomic Energy Agency member states, who was not authorized to comment on the case. □

As Biden visits, Chinese push back over air zone

MARK LANDLER
© 2013 New York Times

BEIJING - Chinese leaders pushed back at visiting Vice President Joe Biden on Wednesday over what they assert is their right to control a wide swath of airspace in the bitterly contested East China Sea. But the Chinese also indicated they had not decided how aggressively to enforce their so-called air defense identification zone, which has ignited tensions with Japan.

Shuttling from one feuding neighbor to the other, Biden arrived here from Tokyo to urge China's president, Xi Jinping, to show restraint in the restricted

jets to intercept Japanese airliners flying off the Chinese coast.

In brief public remarks midway through the meetings, Biden made no reference to the dispute, but said the relationship between the U.S. and China "ultimately has to be based on trust, and a positive notion about the motive of one another."

Xi, who cultivated unusually personal ties to Biden when he was China's vice president, sounded a more upbeat note about the broader relationship, though he conceded "regional hot-spot issues keep cropping up."

He welcomed Biden as

miscalculation." He promised to raise those objections with Xi in Beijing.

Biden stopped short of calling on China to rescind the zone, something it is highly unlikely to do, given the nationalist sentiments that have been animated by its standoff with Japan. The U.S. military has ignored the zone, dispatching B-52 bombers last week to fly through it.

Shortly after Biden arrived, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said the new air defense identification zone was a fact of life that the world needed to accept. The spokesman at the ministry, Hong Lei, described it as a "zone of cooperation,



Vice President Joe Biden with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, Dec. 4, 2013. Shuttling from one feuding neighbor to the other, Biden arrived on Wednesday to appeal to China's leaders to show restraint in policing a new air defense zone in the East China Sea that has ignited tensions with Japan.

(Lintao Zhang/Pool via The New York Times)

zone, which Biden said the United States regarded as illegitimate and a provocation.

After 5 1/2 hours of meetings, in which Biden laid out the U.S. case against China's action and Xi made a forceful counterargument, senior administration officials said, "President Xi took on board what the vice president said. It's up to China, and we'll see how things will unfold in the coming days and weeks."

Xi's response suggested China and Japan may be able to manage a standoff that had threatened to escalate dangerously, with China scrambling fighter

"my old friend" and said nothing directly about the air defense zone.

For Biden, however, China's sudden action last month upended what was meant to be tour of Asia with a wide-ranging agenda. Instead, he has had to walk a fine line: defending an ally and rebuking a potential adversary, while preventing a spat over a clump of islands in the East China Sea from mushrooming into a wider conflict.

A day earlier in Tokyo, Biden condemned China's action as an effort to "unilaterally change the status quo" and said it had raised "the risk of accidents and

and not confrontation."

Since the zone was announced on Nov. 23, 55 airlines from 19 countries had provided China with flight information, he said. The Federal Aviation Administration has advised U.S. civilian aircraft to comply with China's request when flying into the airspace.

The FAA's guidance, which officials said was routine, unsettled Japanese officials, who had instructed their carriers not to identify themselves to the Chinese. But Biden's strong words, combined with his appeal to China's top leader, appears to have smoothed over that flap. □

US aims to blunt terror recruiting of English speakers

ERIC SCHMITT

© 2013 New York Times

WASHINGTON - Concerned by the attempts of al-Qaida and its global affiliates to attract more Americans and other Westerners, the State Department is stepping up its online efforts to combat violent extremists' recruiting of English speakers. The campaign is starting at a time when intelligence officials say dozens of Americans have traveled or tried to travel to Syria since 2011 to fight with the rebels against the government of President Bashar Assad. Al-Qaida's branch in Yemen now puts English subtitles on its website propaganda. Al-Shabab, the Islamist extremist group in Somalia, publishes an English-language online magazine. State Department officials acknowledge that the new program is a modest trial run that faces a vast array of English-language websites, Twitter feeds, YouTube videos and Facebook pages that violent extremist groups have established largely uncontested in the past few years. But U.S. and European intelligence officials warn that al-Qaida's efforts to recruit English-speaking fighters could create new terrorist threats when the battle-hardened militants return home. For the past three years, a small band of online analysts and bloggers in a tiny State Department office have focused their efforts on trying to understand what inspires their target audience - men 18 to 30 years old, mostly in the Middle East - to violent extremism, and on finding ways to steer them away from that. The analysts speak Arabic, Urdu, Somali and Punjabi.

In the pilot program that began Wednesday, the same analysts will for the first time also post messages on English-language websites that jihadists use to recruit, raise money and promote their cause. For now, the analysts will post only images and messages, and not engage extremists in online conversations, as they do in the other languages. □

Winter Storm Blankets West, Heads East

Continued from Front

In Colorado, the American Red Cross opened a warming shelter in a church in Black Forest near Colorado Springs, to help people still recovering from a wildfire in June that destroyed nearly 500 homes and killed two people. Meanwhile, the snow and cold sent the Denver Broncos indoors to practice and canceled a men's World Cup downhill training in Beaver Creek. The racers need a clean, slick surface to practice on and will try to squeeze in a training run on Thursday, when the snow should taper off but bitter cold will continue.

Officials warned residents to protect themselves against frostbite if they are going to be outside for any length of time. "When it gets this cold, you don't need 30, 40 mile-per-hour winds to get that wind chill down to dangerous levels. All it takes is a little breeze," Kines said.

The storm hit the northern Rockies on Monday and Tuesday, dumping up to 2 feet of snow in the mountains and in Yellowstone National Park. A four-vehicle crash in central Montana killed Chelsea Stanfield, 21, of

Great Falls. Authorities said Stanfield was driving too quickly for the icy conditions. In North Dakota, Ronald Waters, 59, of Watford City, died when the semitrailer he was driving rolled in a ditch south of the city.

In the Dakotas, cattle ranchers who lost thousands of animals in an October blizzard were bracing for the latest wintry weather, with wind chills of 40 degrees below zero expected by week's end. Cattle should be able to withstand the harsh conditions better than they did the Oct. 4 blizzard, said Julie Ellingson, executive

vice president of the North Dakota Stockmen's Association.

"Cattle are a hardy species; they can endure a lot," she said. "With that October storm, they didn't have their winter hair coat yet. They've acquired some of that extra hair that will help insulate them better." The system was pushing south, and Texans enjoying balmy 80-degree days should be seeing temperatures in the 40s by Thursday, Kines said.

The cold air is expected to linger until next week then move east, where it will bring less-dramatic temperature changes, he said. □



A man cuts a fallen tree during a snowstorm in Duluth, Minn., Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2013. The unrelenting storm has spread about 2 feet of snow in northeastern Minnesota continued for a third day Wednesday. The heavy snow and ice has contributed to hundreds of traffic accidents around Minnesota and was cited by authorities in at least five fatal crashes since Monday.

(AP Photo/Duluth News Tribune, Steve Kuchera)

Supreme Court to set a line, this time literal

ADAM LIPTAK

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WASHINGTON - John D. Apel says his First Amendment rights were violated when he was convicted for entering an area set aside for protests near the main entrance to Vandenberg Air Force Base, from which he had been banned. But the Supreme Court justices did not seem interested in Apel's free speech rights Wednesday during arguments in his case. Apel had been barred from the base, in Santa

Barbara County, Calif., after earlier convictions for vandalism and trespass. But he said those orders should not apply to an area open to the public on the other side of a painted green line that separates the closed part of the base from the Pacific Coast Highway.

"This is a case about the right to peacefully protest on a fully open public road, in a designated protest zone," said Erwin Chemerinsky, a lawyer for Apel and dean of the law

school at the University of California, Irvine.

But Justice Antonin Scalia said the question before the court did not involve the First Amendment.

"You can raise it," he said, "but we don't have to listen to it."

That left a much narrower question about the reach of the federal law under which Apel was convicted. It forbids people to re-enter military installations from which they have been barred.

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court

of Appeals, in California, ruled for Apel on statutory rather than constitutional grounds. It said the federal government could not enforce the law because Apel had been standing on property partly controlled by the state and county.

"The federal government lacks the exclusive right of possession in the area on which the trespass allegedly occurred," said the unsigned opinion, which overturned Apel's conviction. □

LAX shooting suspect appears in court

LINDA DEUTSCH

AP Special Correspondent
RANCHO CUCAMONGA, California (AP) — The man charged with killing a Transportation Security Administration officer and wounding two other agents and a civilian during a shooting rampage at Los Angeles International Airport made his first court appearance Wednesday, still showing signs of the gunshot wounds suffered when he was arrested.

Paul Ciancia hadn't been seen in public since the Nov. 1 attack that created chaos at one of the busiest U.S. airports and affected air travel around the country.

The 23-year-old spoke in whispers and showed no emotion during the 10-minute hearing in the West Valley Detention Center in Rancho Cucamonga, about 45 miles east of Los Angeles. He's being housed at the facility in federal custody.

U.S. Magistrate Judge David Bristow asked the diminutive, slender Ciancia if he understood the charges against him.

"Yes," responded Ciancia, who was shackled at his hands and feet and had a bandage on his neck and bruises on the left side of his face.

His lawyers didn't comment

on his injuries.

Airport police responding to the rampage shot Ciancia four times, including once in the mouth. He was hospitalized for more than two weeks before being placed in federal custody. The unemployed motorcycle mechanic did not enter a plea Wednesday to a murder charge that carries

could be waived if a grand jury indicts Ciancia.

Investigators said Ciancia walked into LAX's Terminal 3, pulled a semi-automatic rifle out of a duffel bag and fired at TSA Officer Gerardo Hernandez.

An autopsy showed Hernandez, 39, was shot a dozen times.

Ciancia then fired on two



This courtroom drawing shows Paul Ciancia during an appearance at the West Valley Detention Center wearing a bandage on his neck and with bruises on his face on Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2013, in Rancho Cucamonga, Calif. Ciancia has been charged with killing a Transportation Security Administration officer and wounding three others during a rampage at Los Angeles International Airport.

(AP Photo/Bill Robles)

a possible death penalty if he's convicted.

Bristow determined Ciancia was a flight risk and posed a danger to the community, and ordered him to remain behind bars. The next hearing is scheduled for Dec. 18, but it

other uniformed TSA employees and an airline passenger, who all were wounded, as he moved through the security checkpoint to the passenger gate area, authorities said. None of the three suffered life-threatening injuries. □

US court:

Negligence not cause of 3rd WTC collapse

LARRY NEUMEISTER

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Negligence was not the cause of the collapse of a third World Trade Center tower several hours after the twin towers were destroyed in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, a federal appeals court said Wednesday, absolving a developer and others of responsibility in the destruction of the 47-story building.

The 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Manhattan said it was "simply incompatible with common sense and experience to hold that defendants were required to design and construct a building that would survive

the events of September 11, 2001."

The 2-to-1 decision upheld the rulings regarding World Trade Center 7 by U.S. District Judge Alvin Hellerstein, who had written that the claims by the Consolidated Edison Co. of New York and its insurance companies were "too farfetched and tenuous" to survive. Con Ed and the insurance companies had claimed that a company owned by developer Larry Silverstein and other defendants could be held liable.

Hellerstein had dismissed various defendants in a series of rulings.

The building fell at 5:21 p.m. on Sept. 11, 2001, nearly

seven hours after the other buildings collapsed. A Con Edison power station beneath Tower 7 was crushed when the building fell.

Judge Rosemary Pooler wrote in the majority decision that Con Ed's interpretation of liability would mean that those who designed and constructed the building would presumably be liable if it "collapsed as a result of a fire triggered by a nuclear attack on lower Manhattan." The judge wrote that while concepts that would allow an entity to pursue a liability claim "must, by their nature, be fluid, at the end of the day they must engage with reality." □

U.S. student debt load varies greatly by college and region

RICHARD PÉREZ-PEÑA

© 2013 New York Times

Rising student debt has become a national concern, but the picture is far from uniform, with students at some colleges borrowing 10 times as much as their counterparts at other colleges, a report released Wednesday says.

The Institute for College Access and Success, a research group, reported not only enormous variation in student debt from school to school - from less than \$5,000 per borrower at some colleges, to almost \$50,000 at others - but also wide differences by region, with students in the East and Midwest borrowing far more than those in the West and South.

The report underscores the murkiness of college costs, with consumers often focusing on sticker prices that have little to do with how much aid they will receive, how much they will pay out of pocket and how much they may have to borrow.

"There's a growing awareness of the importance of student debt, and there are many more tools available now for people to learn about costs, but we still have a long way to go in informing people about how to finance an education, and how much it varies from school to school," said Lauren Asher, president of the institute.

The report came a day after the federal Consumer Financial Protection Bureau announced that it would regulate large loan servicers like Sallie Mae - companies that do not lend the money in the first place but take over the management of the loans - in the \$1.2 trillion student debt market.

The federal bureau, created in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, already oversees lenders, but it recently reported that people who have student debt are often tripped up by the loan servicers, particularly when they want to change repayment terms.

A recent report by the College Board, using different

methodology, put those figures at 60 percent and \$26,500.

The institute's report lists some of the colleges where students borrow most and least, based on the college survey, while cautioning that some colleges that did not take part in the survey might have made those rosters. Nearly all for-profit colleges did not take part. The high-debt private colleges listed are concentrated in the Northeast, while half of the high-debt public colleges are state schools of Pennsylvania or New Jersey.

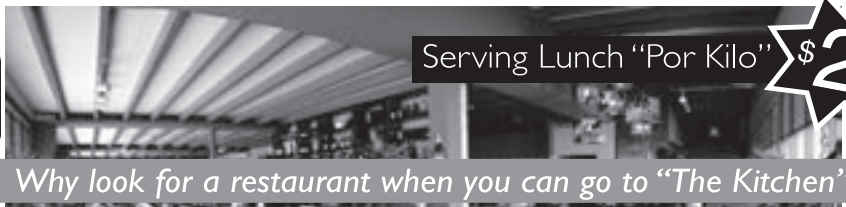
The institute also posted college-specific figures on Wednesday, in a searchable online database. It shows two private colleges, Anna Maria College and Wheelock College in Massachusetts, with more than 80 percent of graduates having student loans, and the highest average debt per borrower, around \$49,000, among colleges that provided figures. Two other private schools, Becker College in Massachusetts and Marylhurst University in Oregon, had average debt a few thousand dollars lower, but more borrowers - more than 90 percent of their graduates.

At the other end of the spectrum, at the California State University at Sacramento, fewer than half of graduates had student loans, which averaged less than \$4,500.

At Bernard M. Baruch College of the City University of New York, the average debt per borrower was slightly higher, but only about 1 student in 5 borrowed any money for college. The colleges on the report's low-debt list are a geographically diverse mix of public and private, ranging from little-known places like Campbellsville University of Kentucky to Princeton University. Statewide, graduates of colleges in Arizona, California, Louisiana, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming were among the least likely to have student debt, and those who did, borrowed relatively little. □

THE KITCHEN

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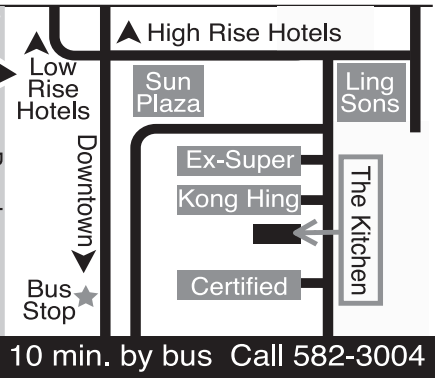


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Newtown releases emergency calls from shooting

JACK GILLUM
MICHAEL MELIA
Associated Press
HARTFORD, Connecticut (AP) —

Recordings of emergency calls from the Connecticut school shooting that were released Wednesday show town dispatchers urged panicked callers to take cover, mobilized help and asked about the welfare of the children as gunshots could be heard at times in the background.

The gunman, 20-year-old Adam Lanza, shot his way into the school the morning of Dec. 14 and killed 20 children and six educators with a semi-automatic rifle. He also killed his mother in their Newtown home before driving to the school, and he committed suicide as police arrived at the scene. The calls to the 911 emergency dispatch service were posted on the town's website under a court order after a lengthy effort by The Associated Press to have them released for review. One caller told police in a trembling, breathless voice that a gunman was shooting inside the building. "I caught a glimpse of somebody. They're running down the hallway. Oh, they're still running and still shooting. Sandy Hook school, please," the woman said. In the minutes that followed, staff members inside the school pleaded for help as Newtown police juggled the barrage of calls.

An unidentified teacher called from a classroom to the left of the front entrance to report what sounded like gunshots in the hall. She said she was in the room with all her students and hadn't yet locked the door.



A bus drives past a sign reading Welcome to Sandy Hook, Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2013, in Newtown, Conn. The 911 calls from the Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings released Wednesday show town dispatchers urged panicked callers to take cover, mobilized help and asked about the welfare of the children as the boom of gunfire could be heard at times in the background. The recordings are released under court order after a legal challenge from The Associated Press.

(AP Photo/Jessica Hill)

"Keep everybody calm, keep everybody down, get everybody away from windows, OK," the dispatcher said.

Another woman, who was shot in the foot, reported that she was in a classroom with children and two other adults, but that there was no way to safely lock the door. The dispatcher told her to apply pressure to the wound.

One of the first calls came from a custodian, Rick Thorne, who said that a window at the front of the school was shattered and that he kept hearing shooting. While on the line with Thorne, the dispatcher told somebody off the call: "Get everyone you can going down there."

Thorne remained on the phone for several minutes. "There's still shooting going on, please!" the custodian pleaded to Newtown's 911 dispatcher, as six or seven shots could be heard booming in the background. "Still, it's still

going on!"

Newtown police officers arrived at the school within four minutes of the first 911 call, but nearly six minutes passed before they entered the building as they sorted out concerns over a possible second shooter, according to a prosecutor's report issued last week.

It's not clear whether the delay made a difference because Lanza killed himself one minute after the first officer arrived on the scene, according to the report. In one of the recordings released Wednesday, dispatchers were heard making calls to Connecticut state police that apparently rang unanswered. One of the three unan-

swered calls rang for at least 50 seconds. State police picked up on a fourth call.

But state police had already been dispatched to the school by the time those calls were made, according to a timeline and call log supplied by Newtown officials. In all, seven recordings of landline calls from inside the school to Newtown police were posted Wednesday. Calls that were routed to state police are the subject of a separate, pending freedom of information request by the AP. Prosecutors opposed the tapes' release, arguing among other things that the recordings could cause the victims' families more anguish. □

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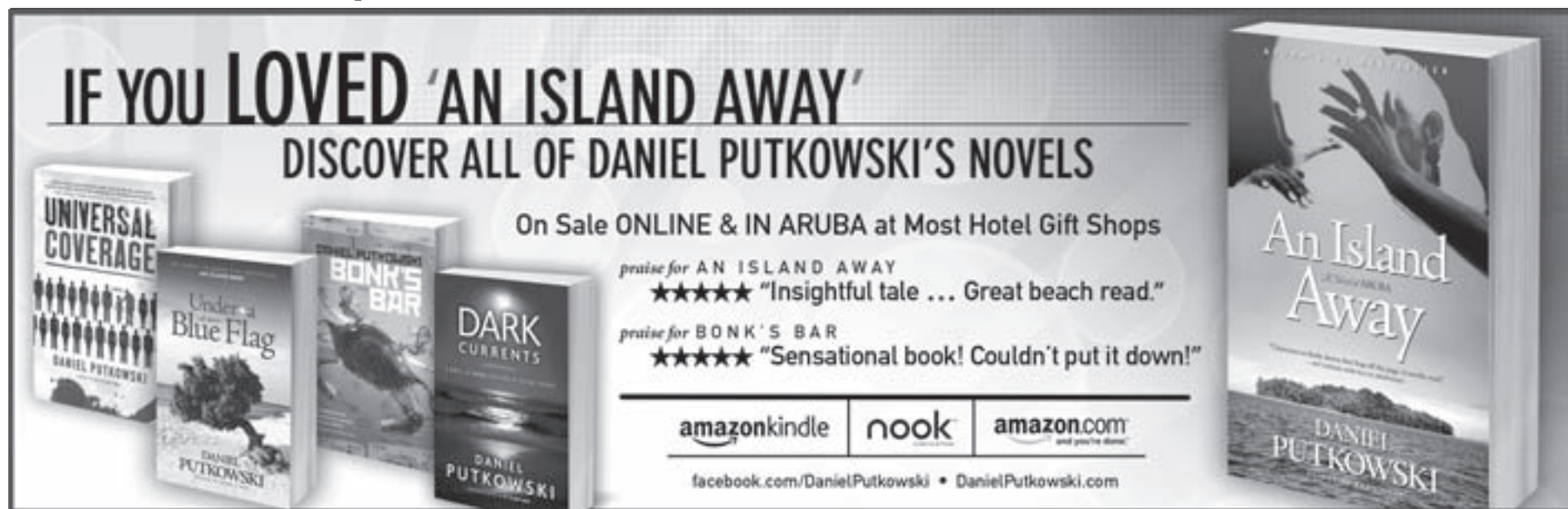
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Obama defends financials of health law

JACKIE CALMES

© 2013 New York Times

WASHINGTON - President Barack Obama left the White House on Wednesday for one of the capital's most struggling neighborhoods to talk about the economy, not simply to divert attention from his troubled Affordable Care Act but to explain how that law, for all of its flaws, fits into his vision for Americans' economic security and upward mobility. It is

tion of conservative Republicans in Congress.

After weeks of being on the defensive because of problems related to the roll-out of the health care law, Obama's speech reflected a renewed assertiveness toward Republicans. If they do not like his ideas for meeting what he called "the defining challenge of our time, making sure our economy works for every working American," then, Obama told Republicans,

sides of the technological change and global competition," he said. But, he added, "We've also seen how government action time and again can make an enormous difference in increasing opportunity and bolstering ladders into the middle class." The address was intended to echo the one he delivered two years ago this month in Osawatimie, Kan., where he honored Roosevelt's call there a century earlier for a "new



President Barack Obama gives a thumbs up as speaks about the new health care law during a White House Youth Summit, Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2013, in the South Court Auditorium in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building on the White House complex in Washington.

(AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster)

a vision of partnership between government and citizens that Obama has described since he was a state senator in Illinois, and it draws on the legacies of three Republican presidents - Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt and Dwight D. Eisenhower. Yet as president, he has only partly realized the policies reflecting that vision and has little chance to fulfill all of them, given the opposi-

"You owe it to the American people to tell us what you are for." Even as the president acknowledged widespread cynicism that has been stoked by his administration's mismanagement of Healthcare.gov, the new federal insurance website, he said repeatedly that government's role was to give Americans a hand up, not a handout. "It's true that government cannot prevent all of the down-

nationalism" and defined the themes of his own re-election campaign. Arguing that his ideas have a historical pedigree in federal investments like land-grant colleges, national parks, Depression-era public works projects, interstate highways and the GI Bill, Obama pressed for initiatives to promote manufacturing, energy innovations, education, infrastructure projects and more. □

Americans' isolationism on the rise: New survey

JENNIFER AGIESTA

Associated Press

WASHINGTON - Most Americans say the nation's influence in world affairs is declining, disapprove of the way President Barack Obama is handling foreign policy and would prefer more emphasis on domestic affairs, according to a new survey from the Pew Research Center.

The survey, conducted with the Council on Foreign Relations, finds just 17 percent of Americans think the country plays a more important and powerful role as a world leader today than it did 10 years ago, while 53 percent say it's less important and powerful now. That's the first time in polling dating back to the 1970s that a majority has said the country's influence is on the decline.

Seven in 10 say the U.S. is less respected than in the past — nearly as high as in May 2008, when Obama's campaign for president emphasized a foreign policy strategy aimed at rebuilding alliances damaged by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Obama's approval ratings for handling foreign policy have since gone negative, with 56 percent disapproving in the new survey. Nevertheless, 68 percent of Americans still think the U.S. is the world's leading military power, and 51 percent say the country is doing too much to help solve world problems. The survey, conducted by telephone Oct. 30 through Nov. 6 among a random national sample of 2,003 adults, was accompanied by a poll of 1,838 members of the Council on Foreign Relations, a think tank focused on foreign policy. A plurality of council members who noted Americans' skepticism over foreign involvement felt that was due directly to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan or to a general war fatigue, while 28 percent cited the U.S. economy or the costs associated with international engagement.

The poll's findings suggest that for the general public, however, economic concerns loom larger than Iraq or Afghanistan. When Americans are asked their priorities for foreign policy, 81 percent say protecting Americans' jobs should be at the top, on par with protecting the country from terrorist attacks. Among members of the Council on Foreign Relations, just 29 percent called protecting domestic jobs a top goal for foreign policy. The finding that the public prefers an inward focus is consistent with Americans' recent focus on domestic issues. The economy rose to the top of the public's priority list in mid-2008 — ending several years of attention to foreign affairs driven by terrorism and the Iraq war — and it remains the nation's most pressing problem in the eyes of about half of Americans, according to Gallup. □

Survey: US companies add 215K jobs, most in year

C. S. RUGABER

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A private survey shows U.S. businesses last month added the most jobs in a year, powered by big gains in manufacturing and construction.

Payroll processor ADP said Wednesday that companies and small businesses added 215,000 jobs in November. And ADP said private employers added 184,000 jobs in October, much stronger than its ini-

tial estimate of 130,000.

The ADP numbers cover only private businesses and often diverge from the government's more comprehensive report. Last month, the Labor Department said private businesses added 212,000 jobs in October. The Labor Department will report on November job growth Friday. Still, the figure suggests that hiring remained healthy in November after picking up in the prior three months. Manufac-

turing and construction firms each added 18,000 jobs. That was the biggest gain for manufacturers since early this year.

Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics, said the figures show that employers shook off the partial government shutdown in October and kept hiring, despite a drop in consumer confidence. Moody's helps compile the ADP data.

"That's very encouraging as we make our way into

next year," Zandi said.

Other economists also said the hiring boost was a good sign, but noted that the ADP figures are not always a reliable guide to the government's figure.

"Take this with a grain of salt, but if the direction is right, it is good news," said Jennifer Lee, an economist at BMO Capital Markets. Employers of all sizes added jobs, the report found. And services firms added 176,000 jobs, the most in a year.

The government says public and private employers have added an average of 202,000 jobs a month from August through October. That was up from an average of 146,000 from May through June.

At the same time, growth picked up. The economy expanded at a 2.8 percent annual rate in the July-September quarter. But analysts expect growth to slow in the current quarter to about a 2 percent rate. □

US Financial Front:

America's trade deficit drops to \$40.6B in October



In this October 2013 photo, container ships wait to be off loaded in a thick fog in Oakland, Calif. The government reported a dip in the U.S. trade deficit for October on Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2013. (AP Photo/Ben Margot)

MARTIN CRUTSINGER

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. trade deficit fell in October, helped by America's energy boom that lifted overall exports to an all-time high.

The trade gap narrowed to \$40.6 billion in October, the Commerce Department said Wednesday. That's 5.4 percent lower than the September gap of \$43 billion, which was higher than initially estimated.

Exports rose 1.8 percent to a record \$192.7 billion, buoyed by a 6 percent gain in petroleum exports. Imports rose 0.4 percent to \$233.3 billion, the highest since March 2012. Oil imports rose 1.5 percent.

The U.S. is benefiting from an energy revival, which has lessened its dependence on foreign oil. U.S. petroleum exports are up 9.3 percent in the first 10 months of this year compared with the same period in 2012. At the same time, petroleum imports

are down 11.1 percent. The drop in oil imports has been helped by lower global prices.

A smaller trade deficit can boost economic growth. It typically shows that American companies are earning more from sales overseas while U.S. consumers are buying fewer products from their foreign competitors.

Through October, the deficit is running 10.6 percent below last year's pace. The deficit is smaller because exports have risen 2.7 percent while imports are basically running at the same pace as last year.

The overall economy grew at an annual rate of 2.8 percent in the July-September quarter. That figure will be revised on Thursday and many analysts believe growth will be boosted to a 3.1 percent rate.

However, much of the third-quarter strength came from a buildup in business stockpiles. Businesses are expected to

have slowed inventory building in the final three months of the year. For that reason, many economists believe overall economic growth has decelerated to a 2 percent annual rate.

But some economists said the smaller trade deficit in October could mean overall economic growth will be a bit stronger than expected. Paul Ashworth, chief U.S. economist at Capital Economics, said growth in the October-December quarter could be

a little higher than 2 percent, based on the October trade improvement.

The rise in exports in October came after three months of declines. Analysts believe exports will keep growing, reflecting modest recoveries in Europe, Japan and China. Stronger global growth has helped drive more activity at U.S. factories.

A closely watched survey of U.S. manufacturing activity rose in November to the highest level in 2 ½

years. And the Institute for Supply Management's survey showed growth in exports increased at the fastest pace in nearly two years.

In October, U.S. exports to the European Union rose 1.5 percent. The U.S. trade deficit with the European Union hit a monthly record of \$14.3 billion in October, reflecting a 21.5 percent jump in exports.

America's deficit with China narrowed slightly in October to \$28.9 billion. □

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Hezbollah leader assassinated outside home near Beirut

ANNE BARNARD

BEN HUBBARD

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BEIRUT - A military leader of Lebanon's militant Hezbollah movement was

assassinated in front of his home south of Beirut, Hezbollah said in a statement on Wednesday.

The killing, which came shortly after Hezbollah's

leader, Hassan Nasrallah, accused Saudi Arabia of responsibility for last month's deadly bombing at the Iranian Embassy in Beirut, fueled fears of an

escalation of tit-for-tat violence inside Lebanon related to the conflict in neighboring Syria.

But questions continued to swirl about how, why and by whom the military leader, Hassane Laquees, was targeted. Lebanese news reports said that he was gunned down in a parking lot near an apartment where he stayed or worked, which is near but not inside the security zone that Hezbollah maintains around its headquarters in southern Beirut.

Hezbollah did not say how he was killed but accused "the Israeli enemy" of targeting him and said Israel would have to "bear all the responsibility and ramifications of this vile crime." Israeli officials denied involvement.

At the same time, memorial images circulated on social media showing him against a backdrop of the Sayida Zeinab shrine near Damascus, in Syria, framing his death as part of the conflict there. And a previously unknown group

calling itself the Free Sunnis of Baalbek, a town in the Bekaa Valley where Hezbollah support is strong, claimed responsibility for the killing.

Hezbollah, a Shiite organization and close ally of Iran and of Syria's government, has sent fighters to defend the shrine and to aid President Bashar Assad's forces in other key battles, a decision that has enraged Hezbollah's Sunni rivals, who back the Syrian rebels.

Israeli officials said that they believed Laquees was targeted by radical Sunnis in Lebanon as part of sectarian tensions over the war in Syria.

Hezbollah, in keeping with the deep secrecy surrounding its military structure and operations, did not specify what role Laquees played in the organization or how senior he was. But Matthew Levitt, the author of "Hezbollah: The Global Footprint of Lebanon's Party of God," said that in the late 1990s Laquees had been a "very, very senior" figure, in charge of procuring supplies for Hezbollah from Canada, including computers and night-vision goggles. According to information gathered by the FBI and other agencies during an investigation of cigarette smuggling by Hezbollah in Charlotte, N.C., Laquees was in close touch with Imad Mughniyeh, a Hezbollah commander later assassinated by Israel. But since then, he had largely dropped from view, in part because of his exposure in that case, Levitt said.

Analysts said that Laquees could have been a high-level target of opportunity for Sunni militants in Lebanon or could have been targeted for possible involvement in Syria. □



Yellow tape seals off the scene where Hassan al-Laqis, a senior commander for the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, was gunned down outside his home, some two miles (three kilometers) southwest of Beirut, Lebanon, Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2013. In a statement, Hezbollah announced the death of al-Laqis and described him as one of the founding members of the group, suggesting he was a high-level commander close to the Shiite party's leadership. Hezbollah blamed Israel for the killing, something officials there quickly denied. (AP Photo/Hussein Malla)

Egypt official warns against disrupting vote

CAIRO (AP) — A top Egyptian security official vowed Wednesday that authorities would deal "firmly" with any attempt to disrupt an upcoming referendum on the constitution, a warning directed at followers of the ousted Islamist president who have been staging regular protests since his overthrow.

The interim government installed after Mohamed Morsi's ouster has described the referendum, scheduled to be held within a month, as a milestone on what it says is a roadmap to democracy.

It hopes to boost its legitimacy through public ap-

proval of the amendments that two secular-leaning panels spent three months making to the 2012 Islamist-influenced constitution adopted under Morsi and suspended after his ouster.

"Any attempt to disrupt the referendum on the constitution will be faced with firmness and decisiveness according to the law," said Chief of General Security Gen. Sayyed Shafiq in remarks carried by Egypt's official news agency. "We will not permit disruption of the democratic transformation."

Morsi's supporters denounced the vote as a "rubber stamp" for the

political order set up by the coup, which followed demonstrations by millions calling for the Islamist leader to step down.

In a statement, the Muslim Brotherhood's led alliance urged its supporters to "be inventive and creative in laying siege to the coup and its absurd repressive actions, until it perishes completely." It's not clear yet whether they will call for boycott, or rally voters to cast "No" ballots.

The 247-article constitution removed key articles that liberals feared would broaden the role of Islamic Shariah in legislation.

It gives the military the

eight-year right to choose its army chief and defense minister — proponents say this is needed to protect the military from manipulation by political parties, while opponents say it makes the army unaccountable.

Billboards have gone up on overpasses and highways calling on Egypt's estimated 50 million voters to vote "Yes." TV and radio have dedicated much of their airtime to explain the amendments, highlighting new articles that enable women to become judges, criminalize torture, and declare freedom of belief as "absolute." □

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Ukrainian protesters block central bank in Kiev

DAVID M. HERSZENHORN
ANDREW E. KRAMER

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KIEV, Ukraine - The demonstrators who have laid siege to public buildings in this rattled capital expanded their protest overnight, blockading the central bank on Wednesday and setting up tents and lighting bonfires on the sidewalk outside.

Protest leaders had vowed to surround additional government buildings after the Ukrainian Parliament on Tuesday defeated a measure calling for the resignation of Prime Minister Mykola Azarov and his government.

The failure of the no-confidence vote pushed the battle for the future of Ukraine back onto the streets, where protests began over the weekend. Demonstrators allied with opposition leaders say they will not relent until they have succeeded in removing the government, including President Viktor F. Yanukovich.

But the protesters' over-

night goal of blockading the building of the presidential administration had not been accomplished by Wednesday morning. They did advance their sphere of control about 500 yards up a side street leading to Independence Square, which they have occupied, and erected a barricade near one entrance to the administration building.

There, on a cold, overcast morning, a crowd waved flags and looked across around 100 yards of empty pavement at a dense line of riot police guarding the administration building.

The central bank seemed unprotected on the outside on Wednesday.

Smoke from wood fires in drums drifted over the light blue neo-classical style building, while men in jackets and stocking caps stood in front of the main doors.

Asked if the bank was open, one replied, "No, they're redoing the books."

Another added, "They've gone to Bermuda to be



Protesters rest in the Mayor's office, which they have occupied since Sunday, in Kiev, Ukraine, Dec. 4, 2013. As protesters continued their siege of government buildings and occupation of a landmark plaza in this rattled capital, President Viktor F. Yanukovich survived a no-confidence vote.

(Sergey Ponomarev/The New York Times)

with their money."

While it remains unclear how long the protest leaders can maintain enthusiasm as winter deepens, and their main goal of compelling Yanukovich to resign appears largely unrealistic, the momentum seems to be on their side

for now.

Since the start of demonstrations on Nov. 22, many protesters, especially students, have been skeptical that elected officials would answer their demands, which were a response to Yanukovich's decision not to sign far-reaching politi-

cal and trade agreements with the European Union that had been in the works for years.

A smaller counterprotest by supporters of Yanukovich appeared in a park near Independence Square on Wednesday but drew far fewer people. □

Iran's top diplomat reaches out to Gulf states

ADAM SCHRECK
Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — With the ink barely dry on a nuclear deal that paves the way for warmer relations with the West, Iran's new leadership is making a push to patch up tensions with U.S. allies closer to home too.

Tehran's top diplomat arrived in the United Arab Emirates on Wednesday for talks with the nation's leader that touched on last month's nuclear pact, as well as regional security and bilateral relations.

It was the sort of courtesy call Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif is growing accustomed to making.

Since the start of the week, the diplomat has visited four of the six nations of the Gulf Cooperation Council, or GCC, who have long been wary of Shiite powerhouse Iran.

Only Saudi Arabia and Bahrain have been left out of his Gulf tour so far, but they are significant omissions — Saudi Arabia is the region's powerhouse, while Sunni-ruled Bahrain faces a

three-year-old uprising by majority Shiites.

The interim deal reached in Geneva last month over its nuclear ambitions gives the Islamic Republic's new government, led by moderate President Hassan Rouhani, an opening to reset its relationship with at least most of the Gulf states.

Under the pact, Iran agreed to freeze parts of its nuclear program for six months in exchange for some relief from Western sanctions that are hobbling its economy.

"Iran is taking advantage

of the interim agreement to make inroads into the GCC to resolve outstanding issues and each GCC state, excluding Saudi Arabia," said Theodore Karasik, a security and political affairs analyst at the Dubai-based Institute for Near East and Gulf Military Analysis.

Iran has expressed an interest in working more closely with Saudi Arabia too, but there are few signs that the kingdom's rulers are in a mood to talk for now. It, like Israel, remains deeply suspicious of Iran's intentions.

The kingdom sees a stron-

ger Iran as a threat to its own influence in the region, and it and other Sunni-ruled Gulf nations are important backers of the Syrian rebels fighting to topple the Iran-allied government of Bashar Assad in Syria. Riyadh also has accused Iran of backing Shiite uprisings in neighboring Yemen and Bahrain.

That has not stopped Tehran from trying to make inroads with Saudi Arabia's smaller Gulf neighbors. Zarif's meeting with the Emirati president, Sheik Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan. □

EU imposes 1.7 billion Euros in fines over rate-rigging scandal

CHAD BRAY
JACK EWING

© 2013 New York Times

The European Union has fined a group of global financial institutions, including for the first time two U.S. banks, a combined 1.7 billion euros to settle charges they colluded to fix two benchmark interest rates.

The settlement, worth about \$2.3 billion and announced by EU antitrust officials on Wednesday, relates to actions by traders at some of the world's largest banks, including Citigroup, Royal Bank of Scotland and Deutsche Bank. The banks were accused of fixing rates for the London interbank offered rate, or Libor, as it relates to the Japanese yen and the euro interbank offered rate, or Euribor.

The commission is determined to fight these cartels in the financial sector," Joaquín Almunia, the EU's competition commissioner, said at a news conference in Brussels.

The penalties come after five financial institutions, including Barclays, RBS and UBS, previously admitted wrongdoing and agreed to pay more than \$3 billion combined to regulators in the United States, Britain and Switzerland over collusion to fix the Libor rate.

EU antitrust authorities were not part of those previous settlements and conducted their own investigation.

The agreement marks the first time that two U.S. institutions, Citigroup and JPMorgan Chase, will pay

penalties in the rate-fixing investigations.

Barclays and UBS, which alerted EU officials to the improper practices, will avoid fines as part of the settlement. Citigroup, which will pay a total of 70 million euros in fines, avoided an additional

55 million euro penalty by cooperating with investigators.

The banks that agreed to settle received a 10 percent reduction in the total amount of fines they could have faced, EU officials said.

"Those who have settled today have recognized their wrongdoing," Almunia said. "Those who have not settled are not ignorant to what we know. It's up to them to decide what to do."

The penalty exceeds a 1.47 billion euro fine levied last year against seven companies for collusion in the manufacturing of cathode-ray tubes for computer monitors and televisions.

Four banks settled charges related to fixing rates tied to Euribor: Barclays, Deutsche Bank, RBS and Société Générale. The improper activity took place from September 2005 to May 2008, officials said.

Almunia said that the antitrust regulators had opened investigations of HSBC, JPMorgan and Crédit Agricole related to Euribor.

The banks that reached settlements related to yen Libor are UBS, RBS, Deutsche Bank, JPMorgan and Citigroup. The British broker RP Martin Holdings also agreed to a fine over yen Libor. The improper activity took place from 2007 to 2010, officials said.

The EU has also opened an investigation regarding yen Libor against the British financial firm ICAP, which has already agreed to pay British and U.S. authorities \$87 million related to the Libor rate fixing.

To set the Libor and Euribor rates, banks submit the rates at which they would be prepared to lend money to each other, on an unsecured basis, in various currencies and varying maturities. □



NATO chief: Not just Karzai can sign Afghan pact

JAMEY KEATEN
Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — NATO's chief said Wednesday that President Hamid Karzai isn't the only Afghan government official who can sign a security pact so that thousands of coalition troops can stay in Afghanistan after 2014. But an Afghan diplomat insisted Karzai will have final say anyway. Karzai has balked at signing the bilateral security agreement

ance foreign ministers that ended Wednesday. NATO chiefs say they need time to plan for the new mission, and need clear rules before then — in part to help unlock more than \$8 billion in annual international military and development aid planned for Afghanistan after 2014. In a sign that alliance leaders might be looking for a way to circumvent Karzai, NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen

it. Somebody can accept responsibility for this."

U.S. officials tempered that comment Wednesday, saying that the defense minister could sign the bilateral agreement — but only if Karzai delegated such authority. The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief reporters by name, added that this was not a diplomatic avenue the United States was now pursuing or encouraging.

Karzai's refusal comes despite strong support from a key Afghan national assembly. He is deferring a decision to his successor after elections in April.

Janan Mosazai, a spokesman for the Afghan Foreign Ministry, told reporters that his government supported the agreement and would sign it "in good time." But it also wanted two assurances — that a "meaningful" peace process that includes the Taliban must begin in Afghanistan, and U.S. and NATO forces must stop military operations against Afghan homes "because that's not where the terrorists are."

In any case, "it's up to the president of Afghanistan to determine whether the bilateral security agreement will be signed at the presidential level or at a different level between the two governments," Mosazai said. Under Afghan law, any agreement must be signed twice — once to get it to parliament and, if approved, then by Karzai alone in his capacity as president. □



US Secretary of State John Kerry, right, US Ambassador to NATO Douglas Lute, second from the right, stop to speak with Afghanistan acting Foreign Minister Zara A. Osmani, center, and other members of the Afghan delegation during the start of the Internal Security Assistance Force (ISAF) meeting at NATO headquarters in Brussels, Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2013.

(AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais, Pool)

with the United States. The deal would allow NATO to follow suit for plans for a far smaller assistance mission set to replace its longtime combat role after the end of next year. The nearly 12-year mission in Afghanistan following the U.S.-led war that toppled the Taliban regime is the biggest ever for the alliance. Karzai's refusal loomed large at a two-day meeting of alli-

told reporters after a meeting with two top Afghan envoys at NATO's Brussels headquarters that "everyone who is authorized to represent respective governments would be able to sign such an agreement." He did not elaborate.

A day earlier, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry suggested that Karzai's "minister of defense can sign it, the government can sign

France:

New prostitution law passes house

PARIS (AP) — A bill that would decriminalize prostitutes and fine their customers passed France's lower house of parliament on Wednesday by a wide margin.

The French parliament voted 268-138 to pass the bill, which now goes to the senate.

In an attempt to fight human trafficking networks, the proposed law would

introduce a 1,500-euro (about \$2,000) fine for customers and decriminalize the estimated 40,000 prostitutes in France. The bill scraps a 2003 law that bans soliciting on the streets, and would make it easier for foreign prostitutes to remain legally in France if they enter a program to get out of prostitution. Prostitution is legal in France but soliciting, pimp-

ing and the sale of sex by minors is prohibited.

The bill is expected to face more opposition in the senate. Protesters, including prostitutes in masks, have demonstrated in front of the parliament building in recent weeks.

President Francois Hollande's Socialist government strongly backs the bill. A final vote could be several months away. □

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Looting ends as Argentine police strike resolved

MICHAEL WARREN
Associated Press
BUENOS AIRES, Argentina
(AP) — A sit-in by police seeking pay raises in Argentina's second-largest

city prompted hours of looting, robberies, injuries and vigilante mobs trying to protect their neighborhoods before the provincial government agreed

to the officers' demands and peace returned to the streets Wednesday. Three deaths were reported amid the violence in Cordoba and a copycat effort

to loot a store outside the nation's capital. The accord brings steep pay hikes for Cordoba police. Gov. Jose Manuel de la Sota said they will now be the best-paid in the nation. But the violence suggests how easily social conflicts can erupt in Argentina, where most cities are surrounded by slums known as "misery villages," and street protests by activists demanding more handouts to keep up with inflation are a daily fact of life. De la Sota, a political rival of President Cristina Fernandez who says she starves Cordoba of federal support, said her administration could have easily prevented the violence by sending national police in earlier. "It's like we have to burn our national identity document because there are some who don't consider us part of the Argentine Republic," de la

Sota complained in a fiery speech Wednesday after resolving the strike. The president's Cabinet chief, Jorge Capitanich, denied this and accused de la Sota of trying to shift the blame for a problem that was entirely his responsibility. Still, 2,000 border police were dispatched to Cordoba by Wednesday afternoon to help restore order. The violence began Tuesday evening after police abandoned their posts while the governor was traveling outside Argentina, and continued through the night, with storefronts shattered, mobs stealing merchandise, robbers attacking people in the streets and vigilantes arming themselves to protect their homes. Banks and schools were closed and people huddled inside Wednesday as more supermarkets and a mobile television van recording the violence were attacked, even as officers and provincial authorities negotiated the deal. Hospital authorities reported two deaths: a young motorcyclist was shot in the chest and an 85-year-old man collapsed while his home was being robbed, according to Cordoba's Voz del Interior newspaper.



Police officers walk between makeshift barricades set up outside a supermarket to dissuade looters, in Cordoba, Argentina, Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2013. (AP Photo/Mario Sar)

Millions of New Delhi residents vote in city polls

NIRMALA GEORGE
Associated Press
NEW DELHI (AP) — Millions of residents of India's capital lined up Wednesday to cast their ballots in city polls that are expected to serve as an indication of how Indians will vote in next year's national elections. The incumbent Congress party's top elected official, Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit, was seeking a fourth consecutive term in the 70-member Delhi Assembly. Opposing her were the main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party and the fledgling Aam Aadmi Party, or Common Man's Party. Security was tight, with

65,000 police officers and additional paramilitary troops on duty to prevent any outbreak of violence at the more than 11,000 polling stations across the capital. Nearly 12 million residents were expected to vote to select the assembly, in a poll that analysts say is expected to show a trend for the three parties heading into next year's national elections in the world's biggest democracy. The 9-month-old AAP, led by Arvind Kejriwal, a former tax official turned anti-corruption crusader, was threatening to play spoiler by weaning voters away from the two main parties.

In recent weeks, an army of AAP volunteers has trudged through the alleys of the city's poorest neighborhoods to try to tap a deep vein of dissatisfaction that has gripped New Delhi residents, particularly over corruption and a soaring cost of living. The BJP's campaign highlighted runaway inflation, increasing crimes against women and shortages of power and water in the city of nearly 17 million people. "It is time for the Congress to quit," said Harsh Vardhan, the BJP's candidate for the chief minister's post. He appeared to voice some concern of a possible spoiler role for the AAP,

saying a vote for Kejriwal would be "a wasted vote." Dikshit stressed her party's development agenda over the past 15 years, citing the city's popular subway system, numerous overpasses and environmental efforts among the achievements of her tenure.

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IKEA in Spain swamped by job demands

MADRID (AP) — An IKEA store in Spain says it has received 20,000 applications for just 400 jobs, an unprecedented rush that crashed its computer servers and illustrated the desperation the country's 6 million unemployed people face. Company spokesman Rodrigo Sanchez said Wednesday the online applications received since Monday were for jobs as store workers in a shop to be opened next year outside the eastern city of Valencia. He said the most applications the company had received before in Spain were 50,000 in southern Jerez, but that was over a period of a month. Official figures show Spain may be beginning to emerge from a more than two-year recession but the government admits it will take years to bring down the 26 percent unemployment rate. □



Unemployed people queue outside a government unemployment office in Madrid, Spain. An IKEA shop in Spain says Wednesday Dec. 4, 2013 it has received 20,000 applications for just 400 jobs, in a store to be opened next year outside the eastern city of Valencia.

(AP Photo/Paul White)

Eurozone retail sales drop as recovery falters

PAN PYLAS
Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Further signs emerged Wednesday to show that the paltry economic recovery in the 17-country eurozone is losing steam. Despite evidence that growth was weak even in the last quarter of the year, few economists think it will prompt the European Central Bank to provide stimulus at Thursday's policy meeting. Last month, the ECB cut its benchmark interest rate to a record low of 0.25 percent. Figures from Eurostat, the EU's statistics office, showed retail sales across the region fell a monthly 0.2 percent in October. That followed a 0.6 percent decline in September and confounded expectations in the markets for a modest increase. Meanwhile, financial information company Markit confirmed its purchasing managers' index — a gauge of business activity — fell in November. Though the index was revised up from the initial estimate of 51.5

to 51.7, it was down on October's 51.9. Chris Williamson, Markit's chief economist, said the decline confirms that the recovery "lost some momentum" in November.



Shoppers walk by a Christmas market on the Avenue des Champs Elysees in Paris as Christmas decorations light up the avenue in Paris. Further signs emerged Wednesday to show that the paltry economic recovery in the 17-country eurozone is losing steam.

(AP Photo/Christophe Ena)

For an economy that grew by a quarterly rate of 0.1 percent in the third quarter, that's hardly encouraging. "While we shouldn't lose sight of the fact that the region is growing again, in marked contrast to the decline seen earlier in the year, it's clearly a concern that the rate

of growth remains so fragile," said Williamson. What is particularly worrisome is the fact that the Markit data show that the eurozone's second and third largest economies,

France and Italy, may be contracting further. "Declines in the PMIs for Italy and France raise the prospect of these countries' economies contracting again in the fourth quarter, meaning Italy's recession will have extended into a staggering tenth successive quarter and France

will have slid back into a new recession," said Williamson. Luckily for the eurozone as a whole, its powerhouse economy, Germany, is growing strongly — its PMI reading of 55.4 was a 29-month high. Spain was the other bright spot as the eurozone's fourth-largest economy continues to exhibit signs of life in the face of its debt problems and a sky-high unemployment rate of around 26 percent.

The economic backdrop is likely to feature heavily when Mario Draghi, the ECB's president, holds his monthly press conference following Thursday's meeting of the governing council. Though the central bank is expected to maintain a dovish tone, most economists think it will keep its policy unchanged at least until early next year. Further measures that it may consider include making banks pay to keep funds on deposit at the central bank in the hope that it may encourage them to lend. □

In Japan, GM has high hopes, finds low sales

YURI KAGEYAMA
AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — General Motors says it's in Japan for the long haul despite sales of Cadillac and Chevrolet models barely surpassing 1,000 vehicles a year.

There has never been much appetite in Japan for left-hand drive gas guzzling U.S. autos, and there are many informal barriers to foreign automakers making it here.

But GM executives see a glimmer of hope in the fact sales of its luxury nameplates have doubled in the past three years.

The automaker is trying to lure Japanese buyers with the new Cadillac CTS and Chevrolet Corvette, which it says boast better quality and mileage.

GM Japan Managing Director Sumito Ishii declined to give a sales target Wednesday, but said part of the Detroit automaker's sales strategy is to approach buyers who may not have preconceptions about GM.

General Motors Co. has also begun to offer models with the steering wheel on the right, which is standard in Japan.

"We have just begun our fight," Ishii told reporters at the Foreign Correspondents Club in Tokyo. "We offer attractive qualities that you can't find in Japanese and European cars." Ishii and Gregg Sedewitz, director of sales and marketing, said the cars represent American luxury and are synonymous with risk taking, coolness and Hollywood celebrities.

The Cadillac CTS comes packed with the latest technology, such as a lightweight structure and a direct injection turbo engine, and sells for 5.99 million yen (\$59,900) and 6.99 million yen (\$69,900).

The Corvette, which ranges from 9.29 million yen (\$92,900) to 11.59 million yen (\$115,900) including the convertible models, is the greenest Corvette ever, delivering 12.3 kilometers per liter. □



Sinterklaas visits La Cabana Beach Resort & Casino



EAGLE BEACH – The holy man from Spain arrived at La Cabana's conference room, with his log-book and his helpers, the Black Piets, prepared to celebrate the Feast of Sinterklaas, or St. Nicholas, an annual event which is uniquely Dutch, observed all over the Netherlands and the Dutch islands, for many centuries. More than seventy children of associates working for the resort were waiting anxiously for the holy man's arrival, and for the gifts he brings, surprises bought in advance and left at the resort with the elves of the Department of Activities -- the diligent folks who organized the party.

St. Nicholas Day is December 6th, and it is observed in most Roman Catholic countries as a celebration for small children. In Aruba the eve of that day, December 5th, is celebrated by young and old without any religious overtones. Sinterklaas is always portrayed as a bishop,



which he was in the 3rd century AD. He is depicted arriving by boat on the island, carrying gifts and a log book which tells him who was good and who did not listen. And while he is considered a saint within the church, the Dutch always think about

him as a kind, over-dressed old man, whose birthday is looked forward to as an excuse to exchange gifts and make good-natured fun of individuals allegedly naughty this year. Pictured here the saint's meeting with the associate children, delivering fun gifts. □



Terry and Julie Dier honored by ATA!



PALM BEACH - Recently the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure of honoring a very nice couple whom are loyal and friendly Visitors of Aruba, as Distinguished Visitors, at the Playa Linda Beach Resort. The symbolic honorary title is presented in the name of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to guests who visit Aruba for 10-to-19 consecutive years.

The honorees were Mr. Terry and Mrs. Julie Dier. Terry fell in love with Aruba since the first time he visit the Island for work, and began bringing the whole family to Aruba the Dier family loves the Playa Linda, the climate, beaches, restaurants, and Aruba feels like a second home and the people are like a family to them. The certificates were presented by Mr. Ernest Giel representing the Aruba Tourism Authority together with Ms. Yvette Tromp representing the Playa Linda Beach Resort. □



Angelee Hughes is promoted within the Salamander Group

PALM BEACH - The Salamander Group is proud to announce that Angelee Hughes has been promoted to supervisor at T.H. Palm & Company. Angelee states that the Salamander Group has given her the opportunity to not only grow professionally but to also meet new people from around the world and make new friends. The Salamander group offered her the chance, she says, to make a Sales Associate position into a career in sales, which she loves and appreciates.

Angelee Hughes started working with the Salamander Group on October 4th, 2010. As it so happened, the sales manager was unavailable on her second day of training, so she was asked to join the associates at T.H. Palm & Company, for the day. A day turned into a year, at the end of which she became a buddy-trainer and was transferred to the Coconut Trading Co, another prestigious Salamander Group store at the South Beach Centre, for about two months. But T.H. Palm & Company continued to tug at her heart strings, and she returned to her favorite store its leader. Having grown into the position,

Angelee achieved the promotion to supervisor at T.H. Palm & Company.

The Salamander Group Managing Director, Jodi Tobman, says that Angelee adds something special to the client's shopping experience at T.H. Palm Company, as they refer to her as a ray of sunshine and come back again and again, so that she could assist them, in picking the perfect gift. The Salamander Group is excited to see Angelee join the leadership team of the company, and take on this new challenge in her career, sending the best of luck her way! □

**Beauty
On The
Beach**

**Anna
Maria
Carusone**

She is from Casurta, a town close to Napoli, in Italy. It is her first time in Aruba and she is on her honeymoon.



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Caribbean Palm Village Resort Celebrates Thanksgiving



NOORD - A most original Thanksgiving celebration took place at Caribbean Palm Village Resort just recently when activities coordinator Farley Croes orchestrated a Trivial Pursuit Contest during the manager's cocktail party testing guests' knowledge of the holiday and its origins. Guests learned a lot and laughed a lot, as Farley

conducted his quiz with questions such as: What is the name of the Wampanoag Indian Chief who first celebrated Thanksgiving with the colonialists? Massachusetts. And which American president proclaimed a national Thanksgiving day? Abraham Lincoln. Pictured here scenes from the weekly popular cocktail party in which guests are

invited to mingle with resort executives over drinks and games, including face painting, every Tuesday. The resort, in its 26th anniversary year, is home-away-from-home for many Aruba repeat visitors, who enjoy their annual visits to the island today, as much as they did on the day they first purchased their condo units. □



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Has good-bad gap with NFL QBs widened?

DAVE CAMPBELL
AP Pro Football Writer

Leslie Frazier shook his head and managed a slight smile when the question was posed.

How hard, the Minnesota Vikings coach was asked, has it been each week to pick a quarterback, the NFL's most important position?

"It's not a lot of fun," Frazier said recently. "You'd like to say that this is your quarterback for 16 weeks, but we haven't been in that situation."

This hardly brings solace for the head of a struggling team like Frazier, but the Vikings are far from the only bunch either sputtering along without a long-term solution or needing a stronger backup for a starter who's hurt. Minnesota is one of five teams that, for a variety of reasons, have started three different quarterbacks this season. That includes the Green Bay Packers, who have started four.

Whether due to failures to successfully draft and

develop the next championship-capable passer or procure and produce a reliable second-stringer, the league this year has seen a clear shortage of quality quarterbacks.

"The supply and demand's kind of out of whack," NFL Network analyst Mike Mayock said.

Injuries are, of course, a significant factor. The Packers have won a Super Bowl behind Aaron Rodgers, and they'll be set at quarterback as long as he continues his career. But since he broke his collarbone last month, the Packers have lost four games and tied the other.

In the next tier down are quarterbacks who've shown promise such as Jay Cutler, Jake Locker and Sam Bradford but have been hurt often.

"How many times do you keep saying on Sept. 1, 'OK, this is my guy,' and then he gets hurt again?" Mayock said. "Regardless of talent, work ethic, toughness, when do you say enough is enough?"



Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers watches the Los Angeles Clippers play the Indiana Pacers during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, Dec. 1, 2013, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

The Cleveland Browns have started 20 different quarterbacks since their expansion rebirth in 1999, the most in the league. From Brandon Weeden to Brian Hoyer to Jason Campbell, this season has brought more instability.

The Browns have tried every avenue to find one, too, but despite a stockpile of draft picks for a well-regarded crop of 2014 quarterback prospects there's no guarantee the carousel will stop. Tim Couch, Brady Quinn and Weeden were all first-round picks who haven't panned out.

Christian Ponder fits in that category, the No. 12 selection by the Vikings in 2011. He went two spots after Blaine Gabbert, who has been even worse for Jacksonville. Both the Vikings and Jaguars are bound to be searching far and wide again for quarterbacks in the draft in May, along with at least another half-dozen teams.

Continued on Page 22



NBA Roundup

Pistons beat Heat 107-97 to end ten-game streak

The Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Miami's ten-game NBA winning streak came to an end with a 107-97 home-court defeat at the hands of Detroit on Tuesday, with the Pistons

having seven players score in double figures as they hung on against a Heat comeback in the fourth quarter.

Detroit's Kyle Singler top scored with 18 points in a

team effort by the Pistons, who led by 18 points and saw that whittled back to three in the fourth quarter but held firm for an impressive victory.

LeBron James and Michael Beasley each scored 23 for Miami, which was without guard Dwyane Wade, who again was nursing a sore knee. □

From left, Denver Nuggets forward J.J. Hickson (7) stands by as Brooklyn Nets guard Alan Anderson, Nets guard Joe Johnson and Nets center Andray Blatche get tangled up with Nuggets forward Kenneth Faried (35) in the second half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, Dec. 3, 2013, in New York.

Associated Press

Vonn completes 1st World Cup training since crash

HOWARD FENDRICH

AP Sports Writer

LAKE LOUISE, Alberta (AP) — Ten months since she last competed, Lindsey Vonn returned to a World Cup course for downhill training Wednesday and said afterward her surgically repaired right knee felt "stable."

Vonn said she will decide after the training run scheduled for Thursday whether to race this week for the first time since a high-speed crash at the world championships in February tore two ligaments in her knee and broke a bone in her lower leg. There are downhills slated for Friday and Saturday, and a super-G on Sunday at a mountain where Vonn has earned 14 of her 59 career World Cup race wins. That includes three-victory sweeps in both 2011 and 2012.

"It was my first run, so I was, of course, a little bit nervous," the four-time overall World Cup champion and 2010 Olympic downhill gold medalist said.

"First training run. First kind of real race situation since February," Vonn added. "So it's been a long time, and I'm really happy."

As for her knee, the one in which she partially re-tore one of those reconstructed ligaments in a fall last month during practice?

The biggest factor for Friday will be making sure there's no swelling in her right knee so it won't affect her thigh's ability to react

near the finish line.

The American covered the course in 1 minute, 59.53 seconds, the 22nd-fastest time among the 65 skiers who finished Wednesday.

Carolina Ruiz Castillo of Spain was fastest in training at 1:57.40, followed by past overall World Cup champions Maria Hoefl-Riesch of Germany in 1:57.41, and Tina Maze of Slovenia in 1:58.06. Current overall World Cup leader Lara Gut of Switzerland was fifth, Stacey Cook of the U.S. was sixth, and Julia Mancuso of the U.S. was ninth.

What mattered to Vonn more than her time was that she was out there. She was quick out of the start, then lost time as she progressed down the slope in the Canadian Rockies.

Vonn said she "can't really put a percentage on" how hard she was trying to charge and repeatedly acknowledged feeling nervous about getting back on the World Cup scene.

"Just trying to stay focused, and focus on my knee," Vonn said, "and get my confidence back." □



USA's Lindsey Vonn races during the first training run for the Women's World Cup downhill skiing competition in Lake Louise, Alberta, Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2013.

Associated Press

"Knee feels good. Feels stable," Vonn said. "And, you know, just going to play it by ear tomorrow and make a decision on the race."

and "fire appropriately," Vonn said.

The temperature dropped below zero during training, and she sniffled occasionally as she spoke

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NHL Capsules

Kings beat Ducks 3-2 in Freeway Faceoff

Associated Press

UNIONDALE, New York (AP)

— Sidney Crosby scored the tying goal in the third period and then won it with a brilliant individual effort 3:44 into overtime as the Pittsburgh Penguins beat the New York Islanders 3-2 on Tuesday night.

Crosby, who tied it with a power-play goal with 12:00 left in regulation, stole the puck from Thomas Vanek just outside the New York blue line, streaked down the middle between two defenseman and jammed a backhand past Anders Nilsson for his 15th goal.

Nilsson was the hard-luck loser in overtime for the second straight game. New York, which has dropped seven straight (0-5-2), gave up the lead late to Washington on Saturday.

Evgeni Malkin assisted on power-play goals by James Neal and Crosby to back Marc-Andre Fleury, who made 21 saves.

Kyle Okposo scored twice in the first period for the Islanders, who are third from the bottom in the East.

STARS 4, BLACKHAWKS 3

CHICAGO (AP) — Kari Lehtonen had a season-high 47 saves, Antoine Roussel converted a penalty shot in the third period and the Stars snapped the Blackhawks' six-game winning streak.



Dallas Stars defenseman Brenden Dillon (4) checks Chicago Blackhawks center Andrew Shaw into the glass during the third period of an NHL hockey game Tuesday, Dec. 3, 2013, in Chicago. Dallas won 4-3.

Associated Press

Valeri Nichushkin had a goal and an assist for the Stars, who had dropped four of five, including consecutive shootout losses at home in their previous two games. Alex Chiasson and

Erik Cole also scored. Patrick Sharp scored his 200th goal with Chicago. The Stars appeared to be headed for a heartbreaking collapse before Roussel skated in on Corey Craw-

ford and was awarded a penalty shot after Niklas Hjalmarsson hacked away at him with his stick.

Roussel then beat Crawford with a backhand into the upper right corner at 3:01.

SHARKS 4, MAPLE LEAFS 2
TORONTO (AP) — Mike Brown had a goal against his former team and Joe Thornton scored on a 5-on-3 power play, leading the Sharks to their sixth straight win.

Brad Stuart and Logan Couture scored for the Sharks, winners of nine of 10. Phil Kessel netted his 200th career goal and Mason Raymond also scored in Toronto's fifth straight loss.

BLUE JACKETS 1, LIGHTNING 0

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Nick Foligno scored a highlight-reel goal in the second period and Sergei Bobrovsky and Curtis McElhinney made it stand up as the Blue Jackets beat Lightning.

Bobrovsky, winner of the Vezina Trophy last year as the NHL's top goalie, stopped all 18 shots before he left with an unspecified injury 4:13 into the third period.

He was replaced by McElhinney, who made the last eight saves.

Tampa Bay's Valterri Filpula's shot just slid past the

corner of the goal as time expired and the Lightning were shut out for the second game in a row. They have lost their last five road games.

HURRICANES 4, CAPITALS 1
WASHINGTON (AP) — Jeff Skinner had two goals and an assist, Justin Peters stopped 26 shots and the Hurricanes cruised past the Capitals.

Andrej Sekera and Jiri Tlusty also scored for the Hurricanes, who had lost two straight and six of eight before bouncing back to equal their most lopsided victory of the season.

Skinner's two goals and three points both tied career highs.

A power-play goal by Mike Green at 6:39 of the third period ruined Peters' bid for his fourth career shutout. Two of the goaltender's three NHL shutouts are against the Capitals.

SENATORS 4, PANTHERS 2
SUNRISE, Fla. (AP) — Colin Greening scored the go-ahead goal late in the second period and Craig Anderson stopped 30 shots, leading Ottawa over the Panthers.

Bobby Ryan, Erik Condra and Joe Corvo also scored for the Senators.

Jonathan Huberdeau and Brian Campbell scored goals for Florida and Tim Thomas stopped 41 shots. □



New York Rangers goalie Henrik Lundqvist (30) makes a save as Boston Bruins' Jarome Iginla looks for the rebound during the second period of an NHL hockey game in Boston, Friday, Nov. 29, 2013.

Associated Press

Lundqvist agrees to long extension with Rangers

IRA PODELL

AP Sports Writer

GREENBURGH, New York

(AP) — Just two days after

surprisingly watching from the bench for a second straight game, No. 1 goalie Henrik Lundqvist agreed to a long-term contract extension with the New York Rangers on Wednesday.

Lundqvist, in the final season of a six-year, \$41.25 million deal, agreed to a seven-year contract reportedly worth \$59.5 million. His salary-cap charge would rise from \$6.875 million to \$8.5 million and make him

the NHL's highest-paid goalie.

More importantly, it should keep him starring on Broadway for the rest of his career.

"About eight months ago I sat down for the first time with my family and my agent and kind of discussed my future," Lundqvist said Wednesday after practice. "There were two things that became really clear to me: No. 1 was I really wanted to win the (Stanley) Cup here in New York. It's my biggest goal and my biggest dream

and what really pushes me right now to work harder. Secondly, I want to be a Ranger for life.

"To picture myself anywhere else, it was just wrong and it was never an option."

New York general manager Glen Sather and team owner James Dolan agreed. That helped negotiations go smoothly until they were completed Tuesday.

The Rangers didn't release terms of the contract.

"There were lots of pieces," Sather said. "This was a very

friendly, peaceful, low-key, unemotional decision to be made by everyone. It was fun. I enjoyed it."

With the salary cap projected to rise, one hurdle was cleared.

"A lot of that is speculation, so far. You still have to be careful," Sather said. "We have a cap to deal with; we have other players to sign. It is terrific that Henrik decided to stay here. If he had gone someplace else, I am sure he would've earned more money, but it always isn't money that's a factor. □

Yankees, Ellsbury reach \$153M, 7-year deal

RONALD BLUM
AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Jacoby Ellsbury, fresh off winning the World Series with Boston, reached agreement with the rival New York Yankees on a seven-year contract worth \$153 million, a person familiar with the negotiations said on Tuesday. The Ellsbury move headlined a day when the Ma-

day that he must pass before the third-highest deal for an outfielder in MLB history can be finalized, the person said, speaking on condition of anonymity because no statements were authorized.

Earlier Tuesday, New York finalized an \$85 million, five-year contract with All-Star catcher Brian McCann. There is a long history of stars

said, also on condition of anonymity because the agreement wasn't final. Pierzynski and David Ross, Boston's backup catcher, both will be 37 next season. With prospects Christian Vazquez and Blake Swihart making their way up the system, the Red Sox were reluctant to give a multiyear deal to Saltalamacchia. Saltalamacchia agreed

and the Rays sent pitcher Justin Choate and a player to be named to Arizona. The Diamondbacks sent pitcher David Holmberg to Cincinnati. Hanigan agreed to a \$10.75 million, three-year contract. Oakland, which acquired Jim Johnson from Baltimore on Monday, reached an agreement with free-agent pitcher Scott Kazmir. The Athletics also obtained outfielder Craig Gentry and pitcher Josh Lindblom

from Texas for outfielder Michael Choice and infielder Chris Bostick. They also took pitcher Luke Gregerson from San Diego for outfielder Seth Smith.

In other deals, Philadelphia acquired pitcher Brad Lincoln from Toronto for catcher Erik Kratz and pitcher Rob Rasmussen; while Houston took outfielder Dexter Fowler and a player to be named from Colorado for outfielder Brandon Barnes and pitcher Jordan Lyles. □



In this Oct. 17, 2013, file photo, Boston Red Sox's Jacoby Ellsbury dives for a ball hit by Detroit Tigers' Omar Infante during Game 5 of the American League baseball championship series in Detroit. Associated Press

for League Baseball player market heated up, with catcher Jarrod Saltalamacchia following center fielder Ellsbury through the Fenway Park exit, moving to Miami. Boston already has lined up a catching replacement in A.J. Pierzynski, who comes over from Texas. Add in a pair of trades by Oakland, a three-team deal involving Arizona, Cincinnati and Tampa Bay, plus two other swaps Tuesday, and baseball's business season has started to boil a week before the winter meetings. Ellsbury was to take a physical in New York on Wednesday.

moving from Beantown to the Big Apple during their careers. Babe Ruth was the most famous, and Roger Clemens, Wade Boggs and Johnny Damon followed. Ellsbury, who turned 30 in September, led the majors with 52 stolen bases despite being hobbled late in the season by a broken right foot. The leadoff man batted .298 with nine homers and 53 RBIs, and the short right-field porch at Yankee Stadium should boost his power numbers. Pierzynski agreed to a one-year contract with the Red Sox, a person with knowledge of those negotiations

to a \$21 million, three-year deal with the Marlins, two people familiar with those negotiations said, also on condition of anonymity because the contract had not been finalized. Also, Minnesota completed a \$49 million, four-year contract with pitcher Ricky Nolasco, who made 33 starts last season for Miami. The Twins are also finishing a \$24 million, three-year deal with Phil Hughes that is expected to be announced later this week. Tampa Bay acquired relief pitcher Heath Bell from Arizona and catcher Ryan Hanigan from Cincinnati,

MLS hopes to place teams in Miami and Atlanta

NEW YORK (AP) — Major League Soccer hopes to place new teams in Miami and Atlanta, MLS Commissioner Don Garber says progress is being made in both cities but deals are not yet close. Former Manchester United, Real Madrid and Los Angeles Galaxy star David Beckham is leading the Miami effort, and Falcons owner Arthur Blank the Atlanta venture. They would give the league 23 teams, one short of the league's goal to reach by 2020. Garber said Tuesday that Minneapolis, San Antonio, St. Louis and Austin, Texas, are among the possibilities for a 24th team. □

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DECEMBER 5 - 11

HOMEFRONT
JASON STATHAM | JAMES FRANCO
MON - THURS 4:50 | 7:10 | 9:30
FRI 4:50 | 7:10 | 9:30 | 11:50
SAT 2:30 | 4:50 | 7:10 | 9:30 | 11:50
SUN & HOL 2:30 | 4:50 | 7:10 | 9:30

THE FIFTH ESTATE
BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH | DANIEL BRÜHL
MON - THURS 3:50 | 6:30 | 9:10
FRI 3:50 | 6:30 | 9:10 | 11:50
SAT 3:50 | 6:30 | 9:10 | 11:50
SUN & HOL 3:50 | 6:30 | 9:10

I'M IN LOVE WITH A CHURCH GIRL
JA RULE | ADRIENNE BAILON
MON - THURS 3:50 | 6:25 | 9:00
FRI 3:50 | 6:25 | 9:00 | 11:35
SAT 3:50 | 6:25 | 9:00 | 11:35
SUN & HOL 3:50 | 6:25 | 9:00

BLACK NATIVITY
FOREST WHITAKER | ANGELA BASSETT
MON - FRI 6:35
SAT 2:20 | 4:35
SUN & HOL 2:20 | 4:35

THE HUNGER GAMES: CATCHING FIRE
JENNIFER LAWRENCE | JOSH HUTCHERSON
ON THREE SCREENS
MON - FRI 6:05 | 9:10
SAT, SUN & HOL 3:00 | 6:05 | 9:10
MON - THURS 5:25 | 8:30
FRI 5:25 | 8:30 | 11:35
SAT 2:20 | 5:25 | 8:30 | 11:35
SUN & HOL 2:20 | 5:25 | 8:30

Sanky Panky 2
FAUSTO MATA | TONY PASCUAL
SPANISH VERSION
MON - THURS 4:30 | 6:40 | 8:50
FRI 4:30 | 6:40 | 8:50 | 11:00
SAT 2:20 | 4:30 | 6:40 | 8:50 | 11:00
SUN & HOL 2:20 | 4:30 | 6:40 | 8:50

LAST VEGAS
MICHAEL DOUGLAS | ROBERT DE NIRO
MON - THURS 6:50 | 9:15
FRI 6:50 | 9:15 | 11:40
SAT 6:50 | 9:15 | 11:40
SUN & HOL 6:50 | 9:15

THOR: THE DARK WORLD
CHRIS HEMSWORTH | NATALIE PORTMAN
3D VERSION
MON - THURS 4:30 | 7:00 | 9:30
FRI 4:30 | 7:00 | 9:30 | 12:00
SAT 2:05 | 4:30 | 7:00 | 9:30 | 12:00
SUN & HOL 2:05 | 4:30 | 7:00 | 9:30

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In this Nov. 28, 2013 file photo, Pittsburgh Steelers coach Mike Tomlin stands on the sideline during an official play review in the second half of an NFL football game against the Baltimore Ravens, in Baltimore.

Associated Press

By **WILL GRAVES**
AP Sports Writer

PITTSBURGH (AP) -- Steelers coach Mike Tomlin's ill-timed two-step has cost him \$100,000 and could cost his team a pick in next year's draft. The league fined Tomlin \$100,000 on Wednesday for interfering with a play against the Baltimore Ravens on Thanksgiving. The NFL also said it would consider docking Pitts-

burgh a draft pick "because the conduct affected a play on the field." Tomlin was not penalized on the play, though the NFL said Tomlin should have been flagged 15 yards for unsportsmanlike conduct for nearly colliding with Baltimore's Jacoby Jones during a kickoff return midway through the third quarter of a 22-20 Ravens victory. The seventh-year head coach called the play

NFL fines Steelers coach Mike Tomlin \$100,000

"embarrassing, inexcusable, illegal and a blunder" but stressed it was not intentional.

"I apologize for causing negative attention to the Pittsburgh Steelers organization," Tomlin said in a statement Wednesday. "I accept the penalty that I received. I will no longer address this issue as I am preparing for an important game this Sunday against the Miami Dolphins."

Tomlin was standing on the restricted white border between the sideline and field during Jones' kickoff return. Jones had to swerve to avoid running into the coach and was tackled after a 73-yard return that might have gone for a touchdown if not for the obstruction.

Tomlin briefly stepped onto the field before he jumped back.

Tomlin said Tuesday he was "mesmerized" by watch-

ing the return on the video board and would accept any repercussions for his actions.

"I don't know what a just punishment is," he said Tuesday. "I have no idea. I'm not acting in a way to preserve my wallet and my money. My wallet and my money is what it is because of the game of football."

Tomlin's players have defended him, noting it's not unusual for players or staff members to find themselves on the edge of the field during a play.

Safety Ryan Clark admitted to standing near the playing surface while watching the Steelers attempt a late 2-point conversion in the final minutes against Baltimore.

"I'm always on the field," Clark said. "I sit on the field, but I try to sit on it away from anything."

Quarterback Ben Roethlisberger declined to discuss

whether the loss of a draft pick would be too excessive but added he doesn't think the furor over Tomlin's near-trip will serve as a distraction for Pittsburgh (5-7), which is still in the playoff hunt.

"If anything, guys joke about it more," Roethlisberger said.

"They're the ones pulling up the pictures online and joking with coach about something. If anything maybe it's a light-hearted fun thing."

The NFL fined the New York Jets \$100,000 in 2010 when cameras caught strength and conditioning coach Sal Alosi tripping a Miami player on the sideline. Alosi was suspended by the Jets and eventually resigned after the season.

Tomlin's job is not in jeopardy and he said Tuesday he had not spoken to team owners Dan and Art Rooney II about the situation. □

NFL QBs

Continued from Page 18

"There are about 15 quarterbacks in the league that have a chance to win a Super Bowl. Let's just tell it like it is. And then there is everybody else," NBC analyst Cris Collinsworth said on a recent episode of "Inside the NFL." "Now occasionally a Kurt Warner comes from nowhere and ends up being a guy you can count on."

That's rare, though. In this increasingly pass-driven league, the position hasn't been any easier to master for even the best of athletes with the strongest of arms. Even Super Bowl winners like Eli Manning and Joe Flacco have struggled this year, aberrations or not while injuries and instability swirl around them on offense.

"We're asking quarterbacks to do what I perceive to be almost super-human things on a consis-



Detroit Lions defensive tackle Ndamukong Suh (90) sacks Green Bay Packers quarterback Matt Flynn for a safety during the third quarter of an NFL football game at Ford Field in Detroit, Thursday, Nov. 28, 2013.

tent basis," Mayock said. "We're asking them to have a certain physical skill level: Arm strength, athletic ability, foot speed, hand-eye coordination. But on top of that they've got to process information like

a computer. We're putting more and more of the mental piece of this on the quarterback, and the decision-making both at the line of scrimmage and in the pocket is more complicated than it's ever been."

So, for the teams that don't have a Hall of Fame-bound player like Peyton Manning or a steady young stand-out like Russell Wilson and haven't succeeded in the draft, will they ever have a chance to win a champi-

onship?

Well, sure. They'll just have to keep trying.

College and high school offenses have become more complex and powerful. Summer camps around the country have helped teenagers develop their skills to much greater degrees. The nature of the NFL makes a scenario with 25 elite quarterbacks dominating the league improbable. But there'll always be a new pool of candidates for the job.

"It's a good time to be a quarterback. Kids are getting reps at a younger age and developing the necessary skills," Denver interim coach Jack Del Rio said. "So I don't think there will be a shortage. You always look at who's going to be the next storied guy, who's going to be the next Hall of Fame-type guy, and I think we want to crown people before they have their careers. But the talent will continue to come through the ranks, and we'll continue to see really gifted players." □

Tech Tips: Guide to protecting Internet accounts

ANICK JESDANUN

AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Security experts say passwords for more than 2 million Facebook, Google and other accounts have been compromised and circulated online, just the latest example of breaches involving leading Internet companies.

Some services including Twitter have responded by disabling the affected passwords. But there are several things you can do

to minimize further threats—even if your account isn't among the 2 million that were compromised.

Here are some tips to help you secure your online accounts:

— **ONE THING LEADS TO ANOTHER:**

When a malicious hacker gets a password to one account, it's often a stepping stone to a more serious breach, especially because many people use the same passwords on multiple accounts. So if

Russia's first smartphone goes on sale

ANDREW ROTH

© 2013 New York Times

MOSCOW — Russia's first smartphone — a quirky, dual-screen device with a traditional LCD-color display on one side and an electronic-paper display similar to the Amazon Kindle on the other — began selling in Russia and several other European countries Wednesday.

The Yotaphone, developed by a Russian tech startup, Yota Devices, will be sold for about \$675 in Europe and for \$600 in Russia, slightly cheaper than top competitors like the Apple iPhone 5 and the Samsung Galaxy S4.

The Russian phone, which uses an Android operating system, is an attempt by a European company to jump into the handset market, largely dominated by U.S. and Asian manufacturers. Nokia,

the largest cellphone maker in Europe, is in the final stages of selling that business to Microsoft for \$7.2 billion.

Jolla, a smaller Finnish startup founded by former Nokia engineers, has only recently started selling its own handset aimed at a global audience.

At a kickoff event at the Garage Center for Contemporary Culture in downtown Moscow, the chief executive of Yota Devices, Vladislav Martynov, said the introduction of dual screens was "a revolution

in telephone architecture" and would conserve battery life.

Martynov said that the electronic-ink display on the back of the Yotaphone would show information, including feeds from Facebook and Twitter, even when the phone is not in use.

"Before Yotaphone, this space was useless," he said.

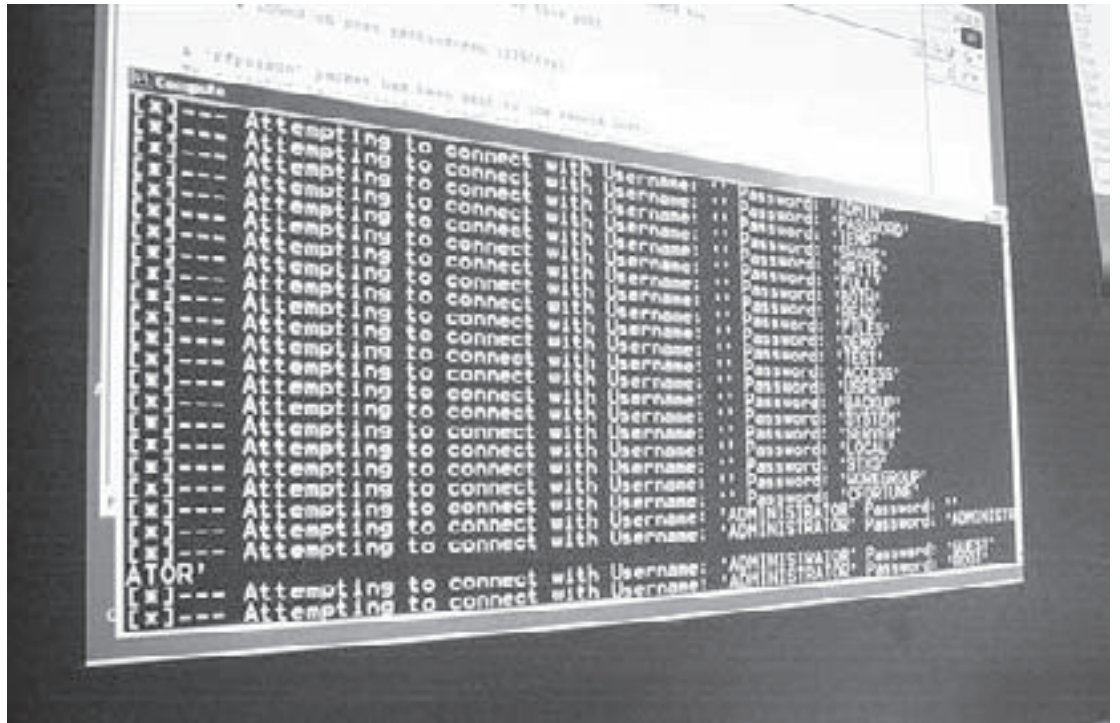
Interest in smartphones is growing in Russia, as it is in other developing countries, with two of every five phones sold in the second quarter being a smartphone, the research firm IDC said in a report last month.

The Yotaphone made a strong showing in January at the International Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, where it won a CNET Best of CES Award for "Hottest Mobile Device."

Martynov declined to say how many units were in production but said more than 10,000 orders for the phone had been placed in advance of the launching. Besides Russia, the device is being sold in Austria, France,

Germany and Spain. It will go on sale in Britain in January. There are no plans to sell it in the United States.

The phone has a 4.3-inch 1280 HD display, slightly larger than the iPhone 5 but smaller than the top-selling Galaxy S4, which has a 5-inch screen. □



In this Thursday, Jan. 10, 2002, file photo, a computer screen shows a password attack in progress at the Norwich University computer security training program in Northfield, Vt. Security experts said Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2013, that passwords for more than 2 million Facebook, Google and other accounts have been compromised and circulated online, just the latest example of breaches affecting leading Internet services.

Associated Press

someone breaks into your Facebook account, that person might try the same password on your banking or Amazon account. Suddenly, it's not just about fake messages being posted to your social media accounts. It's about your hard-earned money.

It's particularly bad if the compromised password is for an email account. That's because when you click on a link on a site saying you've forgotten your password, the service will typically send a reset message by email. People who are able to break into your email account, therefore, can use it to create their own passwords for all sorts of accounts. You'll be locked out as they shop and spend, courtesy of you.

If the compromised password is one you use for work, someone can use it to break in to your employer's network, where there are files with trade secrets or customers' credit card numbers.

— **BETTER PASSWORDS:**

Many breaches occur because passwords are too easy to guess. There's no evidence that guessing was how these 2 million accounts got compromised, but it's still a good reminder to strengthen your pass-

words. Researchers at security company Trustwave analyzed the passwords compromised and found that only 5 percent were excellent and 17 percent were good. The rest were moderate or worse.

What makes a password strong?

— **Make them long.** The minimum should be eight characters, but even longer is better.

— **Use combinations of letters and numbers, upper and lower case and symbols such as the exclamation mark.** Try to vary it as much as you can. "My!PaSsWoRd-32" is far better than "mypassword32."

— **Avoid words that are in dictionaries, as there are programs that can crack passwords by going through databases of known words.** These programs know about such tricks as adding numbers and symbols, so you'll want to make sure the words you use aren't in the databases. One trick is to think of a sentence and use just the first letter of each word — as in "tqbfjotld" for "the quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog."

— **Avoid easy-to-guess words, even if they aren't in the dictionary.** Avoid your name, company name or

hometown, for instance. Avoid pets and relatives' names, too. Likewise, avoid things that can be looked up, such as your birthday or ZIP code.

One other thing to consider: Many sites let you reset your password by answering a security question, but these answers — such as your pet or mother's maiden name — are possible to look up. So try to make these answers complex just like passwords, by adding numbers and special characters and making up responses.

— **A SECOND LAYER:**

Many services offer a second level of authentication when you're accessing them from a computer or device for the first time. These services will send you a text message to a phone number on file, for instance. The text message contains a code that you need in addition to your password. The idea is that a hacker may have your password, but won't have ready access to your phone.

Facebook, Google, Microsoft and Twitter are among the services offering this dual authentication. It's typically an option, something you have to turn on. Do that. It may be a pain, but it will save you grief later. □

STREET BRIEFS

Dutch insurer Achmea set to cut 4,000 jobs

AMSTERDAM (AP) — One of the largest insurers in the Netherlands, Achmea NV, says it will cut 4,000 jobs, which represents around 20 percent of its workforce. The company says Wednesday that customers increasingly avoid doing face-to-face business with insurance agents, preferring to shop and apply for policies on the Internet. As a result, Achmea will invest in its online services — and cut staff. The job cuts come amid rising concerns over the Dutch economy and a rise in the unemployment rate to 7 percent from 4.4 percent in 2011. Last week Standard & Poor's stripped the country of its top triple A credit rating. The Dutch insurance industry has struggled in recent years following a scandal after policies linked to investments were found to have excessive and opaque fees and commissions.

Philip Morris wants big stake in Megapolis

NEW YORK (AP) — Philip Morris is buying a 20 percent stake in Megapolis Distribution BV, the holding company for its Russian cigarette distributor, for \$750 million. Megapolis focuses mostly on the distribution of tobacco and beverages. It handles about 70 percent of the cigarettes sold in Russia through distribution agreements with Philip Morris, Japan Tobacco International and Imperial Tobacco Group. The agreement also includes an additional payment of up to \$100 million based on Megapolis' operational performance over the four fiscal years after the deal's closing. "This investment paves the way for infrastructure expansion and improved operating efficiencies in the strategic area of distribution in Russia, and will therefore benefit our wide portfolio of leading brands," Miroslaw Zielenki, Philip Morris' president of Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Africa region and PMI Duty Free, said in a statement. □

Deere expands share buyback by \$8 billion

The Associated Press

Deere & Co. said Wednesday that its board of directors approved an increase to the company's share buyback program. It also declared a quarterly dividend.

The tractor maker said that it will boost its share buyback program by \$8 billion. It still has about \$1 billion remaining from a \$5

billion share buyback program announced in May 2008. Since 2004, Deere said it has repurchased about \$11 billion of common stock. The company said it had about 375 million outstanding shares as of Oct. 31. Deere also announced a quarterly dividend of 51 cents per share, which will be paid on Feb. 3 to shareholders of record

as of Dec. 31.

"Today's action reflects our confidence in the company's long-term future growth opportunities," Deere CEO Samuel Allen said. The company, which is based in Moline, Illinois, also makes mowers, plows and other gear used by farmers.

Companies typically buy back stock when they

have excess cash on hand or feel their shares are undervalued. Buying back stock can boost the value of remaining shares.

Deere's profits have been rising after it raised prices on farm and construction equipment.

Shares of Deere rose \$3.68, or 4.5 percent, to \$86.39 in morning trading Wednesday. □

Stocks struggle as investors weigh economic news

STEVE ROTHWELL

AP Markets Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The stock market continued its sluggish start to the month on Wednesday.

Stocks fell as investors weighed conflicting economic reports and assessed the outlook for the Federal Reserve's economic stimulus program.

The market was lower in early trading after a payroll company reported that U.S. businesses added

index fell to the lowest level since June, indicating that cautious spending by consumers and businesses may be slowing growth.

By midday stocks began sliding again and the Standard & Poor's 500 index closed lower for the fourth straight day, its longest losing streak in more than two months.

The latest bout of investor anxiety about the Fed's plans for its stimulus program comes ahead of

After surging this year, stocks have had a slow start to December, statistically one of the strongest months for the market. The S&P 500 index has dropped 0.7 percent so far, paring its annual gain to 25.7 percent. The big gains have left some investors nervous about adding to their holdings, lest they buy at the peak in the market.

"Things have been up and down," said Bob Gavlak, a wealth adviser with

department store chain to less than half.

CF Industries was the biggest gainer in the Standard & Poor's 500 index, surging \$22.88, or 10.7 percent, to \$237.07 after the fertilizer company told investors that it was evaluating whether to increase its dividends over time and said it expected to have "significant" additional cash to give to shareholders.

The Dow Jones industrial average fell 24.85 points, or 0.2 percent, to 15,889.77. The S&P 500 index fell 2.34 points, or 0.1 percent, to 1,792.81. The Nasdaq composite edged up 0.80 point to 4,038.

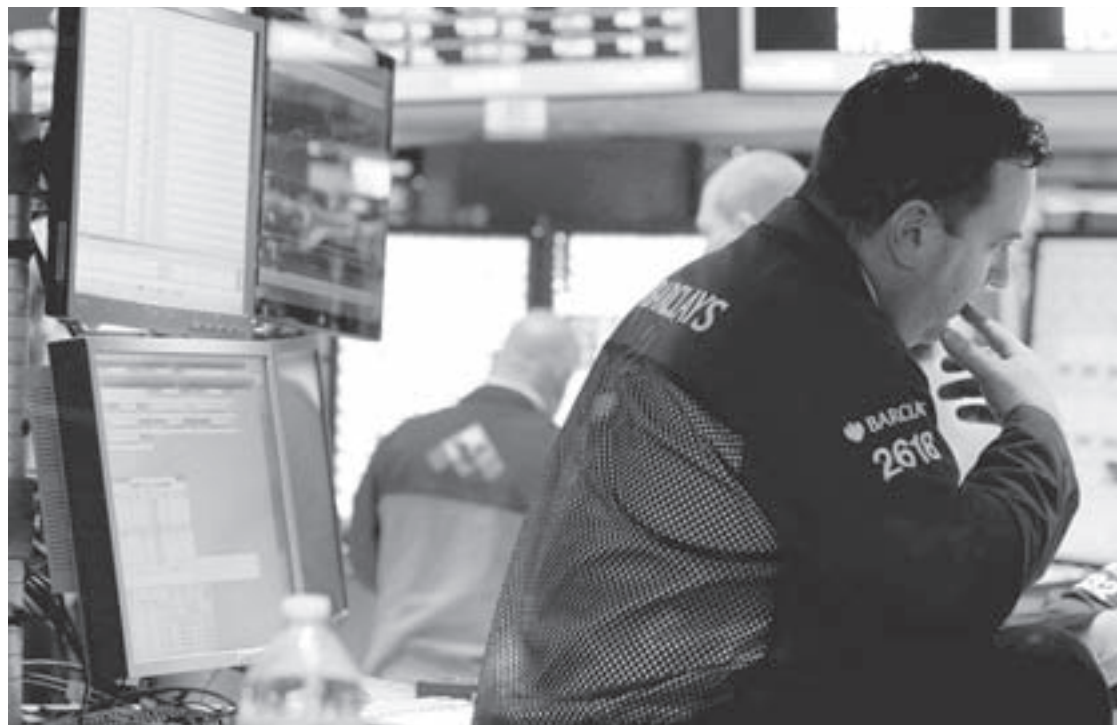
As stocks slumped, the yield on the 10-year Treasury note rose to its highest level in more than two months. The yield on the 10-year note climbed to 2.84 percent from 2.78 percent on Tuesday, resuming its upward trajectory on signs that the economy is maintaining its recovery. In September the yield climbed as high as 3 percent amid speculation that the Fed was set to announce that it would cut back on its economic stimulus.

Investors are following Treasury rates closely because they are used as a benchmark for setting many kinds of borrowing rates, such as those on mortgages.

However, it will be the speed at which interest rates climb, rather than the absolute level that they reach, that will be crucial for the economy and the stock market, said Quincy Krosby, a market strategist at Prudential Financial.

"Markets can get used to a gradual move," said Krosby.

The stock market has had an outstanding year. □



Specialist James Sciulli works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. World stock markets put in a patchy performance Wednesday Dec. 4, 2013, with Japan suffering a sharp fall, as investors continued to worry the U.S. Federal Reserve will soon start reducing its monetary stimulus.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

the most jobs in a year last month as manufacturing and construction expanded. Investors worried that this latest sign of economic expansion could mean that the Fed will pull back on its stimulus sooner than previously expected.

Indexes reversed course in mid-morning trading after another survey showed weakness in the U.S. service sector last month. The Institute for Supply Management said its service-sector

the government's closely watched monthly employment report due out on Friday. The Fed's \$85 billion in monthly bond purchases have been supporting financial markets and giving investors an incentive to buy stocks by making bonds seem relatively expensive. The Fed's program is aimed at supporting the economy by keeping long-term interest rates very low to encourage borrowing and hiring.

Strategic Wealth Partners. "There's some general angst about whether the market is overvalued and when is it going to come back down."

Sears was among the biggest losers on Wednesday. The stock fell \$4.63, or 8.3 percent, to \$50.92 after the company's CEO, the billionaire hedge-fund manager Eddie Lampert, who is also chairman and chief executive of Sears, reduced his stake in the

Super Bowl advertising is already sold out: Fox

STUART ELLIOTT

© 2013 New York Times

The phrase "going, going, gone" is associated with baseball rather than football, but Fox Broadcasting is telling advertisers that commercial time during Super Bowl XLVIII on Feb. 2 is, finally, gone.

Because the Super Bowl is the biggest day of the year for advertising as well as football, the pace of sales of commercial time for ads shown during each game is closely watched by Madison Avenue. To be sold out just after Thanksgiving is an above-average result, meaning demand for spots was strong; when demand is weak, as during recessions, for instance, the network broadcasting the Super Bowl may have spots left to sell until the weekend of the game.

"The Super Bowl is done," Neil Mulcahy, executive vice president for sales at Fox Sports, part of 21st Century Fox, said in a phone interview.

When asked which categories helped achieve the sellout, Mulcahy cited automobiles, saying: "Certainly, the autos embraced it. All the car companies are back, and GM is back."

His reference was to a decision by General Motors, which said in August that it would return as a sponsor after sitting out Super Bowl XLVII this year.

Mulcahy declined to list specific advertisers beyond that, citing the tradition that it is left to the buyers of commercial time to discuss their purchases rather than to the sellers. The other automakers that have said so far that they plan to advertise during Super Bowl XLVIII are Hyundai, Jaguar and Kia.

The advertisers in other categories that have announced they are buying commercials include Anheuser-Busch InBev, Butterfinger, Dannon Oikos yogurt, Doritos, GoDaddy, Intuit, SodaStream and Wonderful pistachios.

In recent weeks, Fox Sports executives have described the commercial inventory for the game as virtually sold out, practically sold out and almost sold out. Back in September, for example, when announcing a Super Bowl ad contest, the executives said the game was about 95 percent sold.

"It's a fluid process," Mulcahy said.

Demand among potential sponsors did not seem to be affected much by the rates Fox is charging. Earlier estimates were that the price tag was around \$4 million for each 30 seconds of commercial time in the game, but there are indications that some advertisers are paying in a range between \$4 million and \$4.5 million.

Mulcahy and Marla Newman, senior vice president for digital ad sales at Fox Sports, said they still had spots available during pregame and postgame programming on Fox Broadcasting; during programming related to the Super Bowl on a new cable channel, Fox Sports 1; and in the live stream of the Super Bowl that is to be available on foxsports.com and on tablets.

Newman said that the auto category was also strong in digital advertising, along with categories like consumer packaged goods, mobile devices and insurance.

Both she and Mulcahy said they believed that the fact the Super Bowl will be played for the first time in the metropolitan New York area may be encouraging ad sales, pointing to the many special events and promotions that are scheduled to begin the Monday before the game and extend through the postgame period. Various 21st Century Fox properties are planning special programming to take advantage of the novelty of the location; for instance, Mulcahy said, Fox Sports 1; WNYW, Channel 5, the Fox Broadcasting station in New York; and the Fox News cable channel will present shows from Times Square. □

US new-home sales recover in October

JOSH BOAK

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) —

Americans ramped up purchases of new homes in October after three months of soft sales, evidence that the housing recovery is improving fitfully. Sales of new homes grew 25.4 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 444,000, the Commerce

rose sharply and a limited number of homes for sale boosted prices. The combination made home-buying less affordable.

New-homes sales have risen 21.6 percent higher for the 12 months ending in October. Still, the pace remains well below the 700,000 consistent with a healthy market.

"The report suggests sharp

past 12 months.

The number of new homes available for sale was 183,000 in October. That's still relatively lean — at the August sales' pace it would almost take five months to exhaust the supply.

The Commerce Department delayed the release of the September sales figures because of the partial government shutdown in



In this November 2013 photo, workers frame a home under construction in Matthews, N.C. The Commerce Department reported positive data on new-home sales for October on Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2013. (AP Photo/Chuck Burton)

Department said Wednesday. That was the largest monthly percentage increase since May 1980.

But the increase came after sales had fallen 6.6 percent in September to a 354,000 annual rate, the weakest since April 2012. And sales in August and July were revised lower to 379,000 and 373,000, respectively. Sales had slowed over the summer after mortgage rates

weakening through September and then a rebound in October, but the volatility in the data argues against putting much emphasis on a single month," said Jim O'Sullivan, chief U.S. economist for High Frequency Economics.

Prices for new homes eased in October. They fell 4.5 percent to \$245,800 from September and have declined slightly over the

October. As a result, new-home sales for October and September were released on Wednesday, in addition to revisions for the two previous months.

Mortgage rates are nearly a full percentage point higher than the spring. Rates rose in May when the Federal Reserve first signaled that it might slow its \$85 billion in monthly bond purchases. □

US service sector growth weak in November

C. S. RUGABER

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) —

U.S. service sector firms grew in November at the weakest pace since June, evidence that cautious spending by consumers and businesses may be slowing growth.

The Institute for Supply Management said Wednesday its service-sector index fell to 53.9 in November, down from 55.4 in October. Any reading above 50 indicates expansion. The index hit an eight-year high of 58.6 in August. A measure of sales fell sharply last month to 55.5 from 59.7. While that is

still above 50, the decline suggests consumers were reluctant to spend. And a gauge of hiring fell to the lowest level since May. That's a sign job gains may have slowed in November. The government will report last month's hiring figures on Friday.

Economists weren't overly concerned by the decline. They pointed out that the level of the index still points to growth. The government's report on gross domestic product, the broadest measure of goods and services, will be released Thursday. "The

fall ... is a bit disappointing, but the survey is still consistent with decent GDP and jobs growth in the fourth quarter," said Paul Dales, an economist at Capital Economics. Growth in the service industry has been steady this year. The ISM's index has averaged 55 over the past 12 months.

The survey covers businesses that employ 90 percent of the workforce, including retail, construction, health care and financial services firms. Nearly 86 percent of job gains in the past three months have been in the service sector. □

Mutts



6 Chix



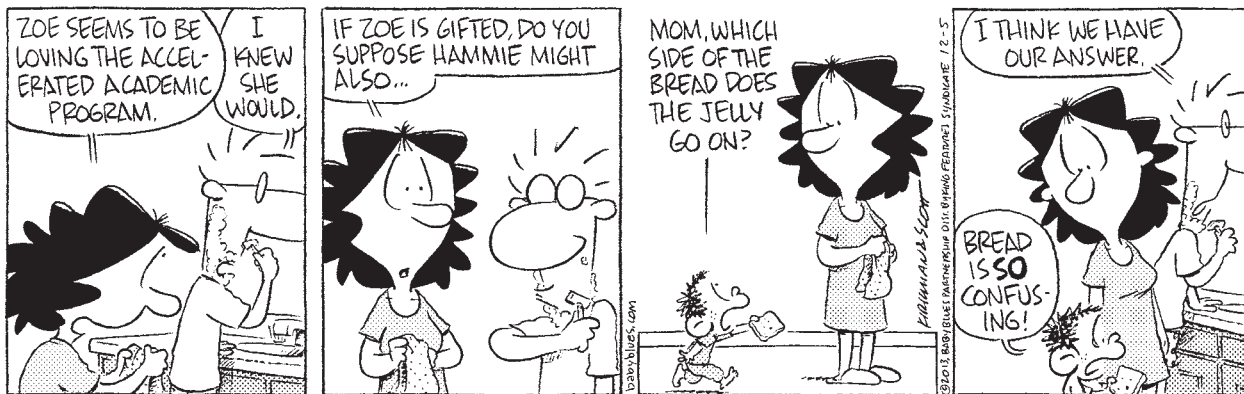
Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

	2		8					
	7			9				3
						9		
		1	2					4
6		2		4		5		9
9					1	2		
		8						
4				3			8	
					2		7	

Difficulty Level ★★★

12/05

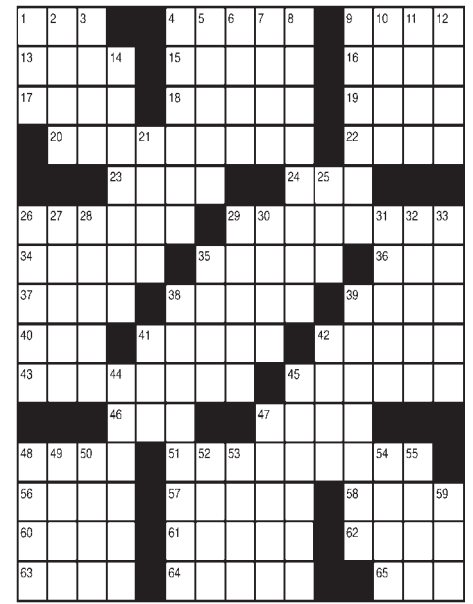
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

7	2	6	3	8	9	4	1	5
9	3	5	1	4	6	2	7	8
4	1	8	5	7	2	6	9	3
6	9	2	8	1	5	3	4	7
3	8	4	6	9	7	5	2	1
1	5	7	2	3	4	8	6	9
8	6	9	7	2	3	1	5	4
2	4	3	9	5	1	7	8	6
5	7	1	4	6	8	9	3	2

ACROSS

- Pecan or almond
- Bonfire residue
- Dutch __; cast-iron kitchen pot
- Letters of urgency
- Range
- Plunge headfirst
- Students' signal to go to class
- Ladies
- Hardly __; infrequently
- In __; prepared
- Make smooth
- Concern
- "If __ all the same to you..."
- Attack violently
- __ retriever; popular dog
- Thin boards
- Lack of foresight
- Regret
- In no __; swiftly
- Wingless insect
- Windy day toy
- Wedding words
- __ beans
- Short __; not around for long
- Practical folks
- 12-inch sticks
- White __; termite
- Audacity
- Black card
- Found; set up
- Path
- One of the Judds
- Small alcove
- Very bad
- Follow as a result of
- Stickum
- Pianist and singer Domino
- Takes a break
- Wet's opposite



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

12/5/13

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

S	P	I	R	E	T	R	A	P	A	L	D	A
C	A	R	E	Y	W	I	N	E	S	E	A	R
A	T	O	N	E	I	N	T	O	S	A	N	D
R	E	N	E	W	I	N	G	P	R	E	S	T
S	P	R	E	A	D	P	O	E	M	S		
T	A	U	R	I	V	E	R	P	O	S	T	S
A	L	S	O	A	I	R	E	D	R	A	R	E
R	E	E	F	S	R	I	D	E	R	P	E	P
O	P	T	I	C	A	L	B	I	S	S	E	T
C	H	U	C	K	S	S	I	T	U	A	T	E
C	A	N	E	I	C	E	D	A	S	I	D	E
U	S	E	R	N	I	N	E	L	O	D	G	E
R	E	D	S	O	D	D	S	S	N	E	E	R

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12/5/13

DOWN

- Capture
- Drug addict

- Story
- Like jacuzzi water
- Age; period of cavemen
- Residence
- Nights before big events
- Down-to-earth
- Ukrainian port
- "¡__ el rey!"; Spanish shout
- __ if; albeit
- Geeky fellow
- Soothe
- Speaker's platform
- Give it a go
- Up and about
- Go down smoothly
- American __; Pacific island territory
- Oats
- To boot
- Ambition; zip
- External
- Marsh grasses
- Type style
- Earwitness
- Murdering
- Safety __; closed fastener
- Slow period for a business
- Can wrappers
- Dog bite risk
- Whole range
- Musical symbol
- Molten rock
- Military division
- Of sound mind
- Throw
- Convinced
- 1/24 of a day
- Door opener

Here's to good health (but no toast)

BEE SHAPIRO

© 2013 New York Times

NEW YORK - Not long ago, at a Midtown luncheon hosted by Arianna Huffington and Lucy Danziger, the editor-in-chief of Self magazine, Dr. Frank Lipman, 59, was settling into his seat

he hadn't the slightest interest in "selling out," decrying celebrity doctors as "cheesy - a required part of television that I want no part of."

But there is no doubt that even if Lipman has no ambition to be the next Dr. Oz,

glowing visages and testimonies are featured on his website. "I've never sought celebrities out," Lipman said. But "I think the celebrities are more used to exploring things that are different, and they want to look better and feel better,

es Health Center, a practice on the Lower East Side that was open-minded about alternative practices; at Gramercy Park Sports; and for Dr. Mark Seem, the founding director of the Tri-State College of Acupuncture, on the Upper West Side. Lipman also fell in with the Chinese medicine practitioners Efrem Korngold and Harriet Beinfeld, who wrote "Between Heaven and Earth: A Guide to Chinese Medicine," and followed Jeffrey Bland, a nutritional biochemist whose work would become the fountain of his anti-gluten stance.

When he opened Eleven Eleven, named for the Mayan predicted date of doom and renewal, or the day for "change of consciousness," as Lipman described it, his practice focused largely on acupuncture. □



Dr. Frank Lipman, the founder of the Eleven Eleven Wellness Center, in his office in New York. Lipman, who also has a powdered-shake line and a diet book, preaches the importance of nutrition to a clientele filled with celebrities.

(Karsten Moran/The New York Times)

on a panel along with the wellness stars Deepak Chopra and Joy Bauer.

When his turn came, Lipman (perhaps best known for the fighting words "gluten and sugar are the devil") spoke with fervor about getting people to "take control of their health" - meaning, largely, to pay more attention to nutrition. "To me, junk food is modern-day cigarettes: They're the same thing," he said, as onlookers munched on poached salmon and Greek salad, many casting a wary eye on the bread basket.

A few weeks before, with no audience in his Flatiron office, he looked crisp in a blue dress shirt tucked into trousers, rectangular glasses and the inevitable Jawbone fitness bracelet. The office was decorated wall to wall with artifacts from South Africa, where he was born. Lipman was less animated and more circumspect than he was at the luncheon. He said

his own star is quietly on the rise. He has a powdered-shake line, Be Well, and a diet book, initially called "Spent," that was recently renamed "Revive." On Oct. 25, he gave his first TED talk, arguing for prevention over disease management. And despite his professed resistance to television, he is brainstorming about a possible show with the chef Seamus Mullen of Tertulia and the Food Network, a client since January. "We'd only do it if there was control over the editing process," said Lipman, who in 2012 did a solo show for Google TV, though it never aired.

He is not exactly new to the scene, having opened his Eleven Eleven Wellness Center (an integrated East-West health practice, as he described it) in 1992. Huffington, Gwyneth Paltrow, Donna Karan, Maggie Gyllenhaal and Kyra Sedgwick became just a few of his recognizable clients, and several of their

and this is what I do." He attended medical school at the University of the Witwatersrand, where he met his future wife, Janice, a ceramic artist who now runs his Pinterest page, and worked for a while as a general practitioner. In 1984, inspired in part by the American music and pop cultures, the couple emigrated to the U.S. To secure a green card, Lipman got a job at Lincoln Hospital in the Bronx, where many U.S. doctors refused to work, he said. "It was pretty rough in those days, lots of heroin and crack," he said. In three years there, he became chief medical resident, and was enamored with the hospital's alternative addiction clinic, which used acupuncture to treat addicts off-site "in a burnt-out building," he said. In 1987, he left his residency to practice acupuncture, for which he received grief from his peers, he said. He worked all around town, including at Betanc-

DOCTOR ON DUTY Oranjestad



Dr. D. de Cuba

EMERGENCIA 911



POLIS	100
POLIS	581-1100
ORANJESTAD	582-4000
NOORD	587-0009
STA. CRUZ	585-4710
SAVANETA	584-7000
SAN NICOLAS	584-5000
FIRE DEPT.	115
FIRE DEPT.	582-1108
POLIS TIPLINE	11141
HOSPITAL	527-4000
AMBULANCE	582-1234
SAN NICOLAS	
AMBULANCE	584-5050

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Ancient DNA from human relative sets age record

MALCOLM RITTER

AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Scientists have reached farther back than ever into the ancestry of humans to recover and analyze DNA, using a bone found in Spain that's estimated to be 400,000 years old. So far, the achievement has provided more questions than answers about our ancient forerunners. The feat surpasses the previous age record of about 100,000 years for genetic material recovered from members of the human evolutionary line. Older DNA has been mapped from animals. Experts said the work shows that new techniques for working with ancient DNA may lead to more discoveries about human origins. Results were presented online Wednesday in the journal *Nature* by Matthias Meyer and colleagues at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany, with co-authors in Spain and China.

They retrieved the DNA from a thighbone found in a cave in northern Spain. It is among thousands of fossils from at least 28 individuals to be recovered from a chamber called the "Pit of the Bones."

The remains are typically classified as *Homo heidelbergensis*, but not everybody agrees.

The age of the bones has been hard to determine. A rough estimate from analyzing the DNA is around 400,000 years, which supports what Meyer said is the cur-



This undated photo provided by Madrid Scientific Films in December 2013 shows the skeleton of a hominin estimated to be about 400,000-years-old, excavated from Sima de los Huesos, Spain. Associated Press

rent view of the anthropologists excavating the site. Todd Disotell, an anthropology professor at New York University, said geological techniques suggest the remains are older than 300,000 years but it's not clear by how much.

By comparison, modern humans arose only about 200,000 years ago.

The researchers mapped almost the complete collection of so-called mitochondrial DNA. While the DNA most people know about is found in the nu-

cleus of a cell, mitochondrial DNA lies outside the nucleus.

It is passed only from

mother to child.

Researchers used the DNA to construct possible evolutionary family trees that include the Spanish individuals and two groups that showed up much later:

Neanderthals and an evolutionary cousin of Neanderthals called Denisovans. They assumed the DNA would show similarities to Neanderthal DNA, since the Spanish fossils have anatomical features reminiscent of Neanderthals.

But surprisingly, the DNA instead showed a closer relationship to Denisovans, who lived in Siberia and apparently elsewhere in Asia, far from the Spanish cave. Scientists are uncertain of how to explain that, Meyer said.

The picture should get clearer if scientists can recover the other kind of DNA, found in the nucleus, from the Spanish bones, he said.

Nucleus DNA would give more comprehensive information about evolutionary relationships between species, perhaps telling a story much different from the mitochondrial DNA evidence, Meyer said.

Nucleus DNA is harder to recover, but Meyer said he's optimistic that some small fraction might be retrievable.

He also noted that the cave has acted as "the perfect fridge" to preserve the DNA for eons, and said it will be hard to find comparable situations elsewhere.

Experts in ancient DNA called the new paper exciting because it showed scientists can recover older DNA than many had thought outside the deep freeze of permafrost areas.

Much of human evolution happened in warmer places.

"We had been operating for a while under the assumption that the oldest DNA we're going to get is about 100,000 years," said Disotell. Now, "we might take a shot at some older samples that we just never would have bothered with in the past."

In warm places like Africa, where DNA does not preserve well, even getting genetic material that is just tens of thousands of years old would be an advance, said David Reich of Harvard Medical School. □



This artist's rendering provided by Madrid Scientific Films in December 2013 shows Sima de los Huesos hominins who are estimated to have lived approximately 400,000 years ago during the Middle Pleistocene.

Associated Press

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Autopsy: Actor died from impact, fire in car crash



This March 21, 2013 file photo shows actor Paul Walker wearing a creation from the Colcci summer collection at Sao Paulo Fashion Week in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Associated Press

JUSTIN PRITCHARD
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — “Fast & Furious” star Paul Walker was killed by injuries from both the impact and subsequent fire when the Porsche his friend was driving smashed into a light pole and tree, according to an autopsy released Wednesday. The actor died from the “combined effects of traumatic and thermal injuries,” according to the autopsy released by the Los Angeles County coroner’s office. The 2005 Porsche Carrera GT was driven by Roger Rodas, who was dead from “multiple traumatic injuries” before the car exploded in flames, the autopsy said. Results of toxicology testing

will take another six to eight weeks. Walker starred in all but one of the six “Fast & Furious” blockbuster films that glorified fast cars and dangerous driving. Sheriff’s investigators are still trying to determine what caused Rodas to careen out of control Saturday. They have said speed was a factor in the crash northwest of downtown Los Angeles. Meanwhile, Universal Pictures announced that it has shut down production for an unspecified time on “Fast & Furious 7.” The seventh installment of the street racing series started shooting in September and was on break for the American Thanksgiving holiday. □



Actor and comedian Will Ferrell, who plays TV anchorman Ron Burgundy, stays in character during a news conference at Emerson College in Boston, Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2013.

Associated Press

College renamed for Ron Burgundy for a day

BOSTON (AP) — Actor and comedian Will Ferrell told students he was “literally in a glass case of emotion” Wednesday as Emerson College temporarily named its School of Communication after Ron Burgundy, his character in “Anchorman.” Ferrell appeared as Burgundy, the fictitious television anchorman he plays in the 2004 hit movie as well as its sequel, “Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues,” which opens this month. The renaming was one of several recent promotional

events for the movie. Ferrell anchored a newscast as Burgundy in North Dakota over the weekend. Then he helped cover curling trials in Canada. A spokeswoman said Emerson received no money for the appearance. The idea came from Ferrell’s publicist, an Emerson alum. Many people had asked why the school would name itself after Burgundy, even for a day, said Phillip Glenn, professor and interim dean of the School of Communication. “Why indeed?” he said. “Why not?”

Ferrell pretended to cry as he hugged Glenn and Emerson President Lee Pelton. “To be finally recognized for my work as a journalist is truly extraordinary,” he said. “I can’t believe it’s finally happening.” He took questions from students and reporters, telling them he gets a lot of news from carrier pigeons and offering hair advice including “use a leave-in conditioner.” He also offered this recommendation for journalism students: “Keep a \$20 bill in your shoe. You never know.” □



In this Aug. 28, 2013 file photo, actress Gal Gadot arrives at the world premiere of “Riddick” at the Mann Village Westwood Theater in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

Wonder Woman cast for Batman and Superman film

JAKE COYLE
AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Wonder Woman is finally coming to the big screen. Israel-born actress Gal Gadot has been cast as Wonder Woman in Warner Bros.’ superhero team-up film with Batman and Superman, the studio announced Wednesday. Already starring in the currently untitled film are Ben

Affleck as Batman and Henry Cavill as Superman. Created in the 1940s and outfitted in patriotic colors, Wonder Woman was most famously played by Lynda Carter in the 1970s “Wonder Woman” television series. But despite the character’s considerable cultural impact, Wonder Woman hasn’t previously made it into the movies. □



This Jan. 22, 2013 file photo shows Martin Bashir at the EA SimCity Learn. Build. Create. Inauguration After-Party, in Washington. Associated Press

Martin Bashir Leaves MSNBC over remarks

FRAZIER MOORE
AP Television Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — British journalist Martin Bashir resigned from the MSNBC cable news network Wednesday, nearly three weeks after causing an uproar by making graphic remarks on his show about former Republican vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin.

"I deeply regret" the comments, Bashir said in a statement.

"It is my sincere hope that all of my colleagues, at this special network, will be allowed to focus on the issues that matter without the distraction of myself or my ill-judged comments." His resignation, effective immediately, was accepted by MSNBC president Phil Griffin, who in a statement thanked him "for three great years" with the network.

The tempest began last month when Bashir suggested that someone should defecate in Palin's mouth because of a remark the former Alaska governor made comparing the United States' indebtedness to China with slavery.

Bashir criticized Palin and her "long-diseased mind" after playing video of her speech about China. He told the story of Thomas

Thistlewood, a former overseer at a plantation who described in diaries how he dealt with wayward slaves by, in one case, having another slave defecate in the mouth of the miscreant. In another case, someone urinated in the face of a slave being punished.

"When Mrs. Palin invokes slavery," Bashir said, "she doesn't just prove her rank ignorance, she confirms (that) if anyone truly qualifies for a dose of discipline from Thomas Thistlewood, then she would be the outstanding candidate."

Bashir apologized days later. But the controversy continued to rage, with Palin's political action committee writing to Griffin and NBC News President Deborah Turness seeking discipline for Bashir, and Palin canceling a scheduled interview with NBC's Matt Lauer.

Bashir's departure leaves a void in MSNBC's weekday schedule. MSNBC contributor Joy-Ann Reid has subbed for him in recent days.

A permanent replacement will be named in the coming weeks, the network said.

Bashir came to MSNBC in 2010 from ABC News' "Nightline." He had joined ABC in 2004 as a correspondent for "20/20."

Phil Collins says he is writing songs again



British musician Phil Collins, smiles as he talks to a reporter, Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2013, in Miami Beach, Fla.

Associated Press

LAURA WIDES-MUNOZ
Associated Press
MIAMI BEACH, Florida (AP)

— Phil Collins, the former Genesis drummer whose earnest ballads made him a star in the 1980s, is penning songs again. Although he dreads the idea of extended touring because it would take him away from his five children, Collins says he has missed the creativity of music since he retired in 2010.

Collins spoke in Miami Beach on Wednesday. He was in town to promote the expansion of his nonprofit Little Dreams Foundation, which he co-founded with his now ex-wife Orianne Collins to help youth realize their artistic, musical and athletic dreams.

"I've decided I kind of missed that writing creative stuff, so I'm trying to get back into writing, and that's getting into a certain headspace and personal drive," he said.

There's no magic for getting into the groove, "just banging away at it," he said. Sometimes the lyrics come first, sometimes the music.

"I've got some lyrical ideas on paper that are good. I've started to thrash around at the piano. A lot of it is hit and miss," he said. "All you need is something to hang an idea on and you're off."

Collins got his start as the

drummer for Genesis in the 1970s before becoming a solo star with hits such as "In the Air Tonight" and "Against All Odds."

Collins said putting on live shows is fun, but he doesn't like missing his children's birthdays.

"I've been like that pretty much most of my life, and I don't want to do that anymore," he said.

Collins has three adult children from his first two marriages and two young sons with Orianne. They divorced in 2008.

Pressed when he might it the road again, he said it wouldn't be before the end of next year. He didn't say whether it would be a solo show or a Genesis reunion.

Collins said he gets a kick out of watching his concerts with his young sons Nicholas and Matthew.

He said they ask him tough questions, like why he makes a crazy laugh on the single "Mama" from Genesis' 1983 self-titled album. The answer:

It was tribute to the granddaddy of hip hop Grandmaster Flash.

"But they don't know who Grandmaster Flash is," he said. Collins credits his boys' interest in his concerts for encouraging him to even consider getting back on the stage.

Critics also give him pause about returning.

"I can't believe that amount of hate that is out there," he said, referring to the online reaction to his declaration earlier this year that he might consider touring.

Even after all these years, the Grammy- and Oscar-winning artist still takes critics to heart. Over the years, they've often panned his pop tunes for being safe, bland and overproduced.

"Knowing that I'm just thinking of it, and someone saying, 'No, God, please don't do that!' It kind of undermines your confidence," he said. "We're all sensitive chaps, you know."

Collins said he was pleasantly surprised at how certain songs have held up over time, such as "Easy Lover" and "In the Air Tonight," which was featured in the 1980s hit TV show "Miami Vice."

"That's going to be on my headstone. He came. He wrote 'In the Air Tonight.' He ... died."

As for his charity, Collins said he often used to receive letters from kids asking how to break into the music business, so he and Orianne decided to create the nonprofit to help those without resources get coaching, training and advice. At first, they turned to their friends in the music industry to serve as mentors and later expanded to sports and visual arts.

Better Pay Now



PAUL KRUGMAN
© 2013 New York Times

'Tis the season to be jolly - or, at any rate, to spend a lot of time in shopping malls. It is also, traditionally, a time to reflect on the plight of those less fortunate than oneself - for example, the person on the other side of that cash register.

The last few decades have been tough for many American workers, but especially hard on those employed in retail trade - a category that includes both the sales clerks at your local Wal-Mart and the staff at your local McDonald's. Despite the lingering effects of the financial crisis, America is a much richer country than it was 40 years ago. But the inflation-adjusted wages of nonsupervisory workers in retail trade - who weren't particularly well paid to begin with - have fallen almost 30 percent since 1973.

So can anything be done to help these workers, many of whom depend on food stamps - if they can get them - to feed their families, and who depend on Medicaid - again, if they can get it - to provide essential health care? Yes. We can preserve and expand food stamps, not slash the program the way Republicans want. We can make health reform work, despite right-wing efforts to undermine the program.

And we can raise the minimum wage.

First, a few facts. Although the national minimum wage was raised a few years ago, it's still very low by historical standards, having consistently lagged behind both inflation and average wage levels. Who gets paid this low minimum? By and large, it's the man or woman behind the cash register: almost 60 percent of U.S. minimum-wage workers are in either food service or sales. This means, by the way, that one argument often invoked against any attempt to raise wages - the threat of foreign competition - won't wash here: Americans won't drive to China to pick up their burgers and fries.

Still, even if international competition isn't an issue, can we really help workers simply by legislating a higher wage? Doesn't that violate the law of supply and demand? Won't the market gods smite us with their invisible hand? The answer is that we have a lot of evidence on what happens when you raise the minimum wage. And the evidence is overwhelmingly positive: Hiking the minimum

wage has little or no adverse effect on employment, while significantly increasing workers' earnings.

It's important to understand how good this evidence is. Normally, economic analysis is handicapped by the absence of controlled experiments. For example, we can look at what happened to the U.S. economy after the Obama stimulus went into effect, but we can't observe an alternative universe in which there was no stimulus, and compare the results.

When it comes to the minimum wage, however, we have a number of cases in which a state raised its own minimum wage while a neighboring state did not. If there were anything to the notion that minimum wage increases have big negative effects on employment, that result should show up in state-to-state comparisons. It doesn't. So a minimum-wage increase would help low-paid workers, with few adverse side effects. And we're talking about a lot of people. Early this year the Economic Policy Institute estimated that an increase in the national minimum wage to \$10.10 from its current \$7.25 would benefit 30 million workers. Most would benefit directly, because they are currently earning less than \$10.10 an hour, but others would benefit indirectly, because their pay is in effect pegged to the minimum - for example, fast-food store managers who are paid slightly (but only slightly) more than the workers they manage.

Now, many economists have a visceral dislike of anything that sounds like price-fixing, even if the evidence strongly indicates that it would have positive effects. Some of these skeptics oppose doing anything to help low-wage workers. Others argue that we should subsidize, not regulate - in particular, that we should expand the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), an existing program that does indeed provide significant aid to low-income working families. And for the record, I'm all for an expanded EITC.

But there are, it turns out, good technical reasons to regard the minimum wage and the EITC as complements - mutually supportive policies, not substitutes. Both should be increased. Unfortunately, given the political realities, there is no chance whatsoever that a bill increasing aid to the working poor would pass Congress.

An increase in the minimum wage, on the other hand, just might happen, thanks to overwhelming public support. This support doesn't come just from Democrats or even independents; strong majorities of Republicans (57 percent) and self-identified conservatives (59 percent) favor an increase.

In short, raising the minimum wage would help many Americans, and might actually be politically possible. Let's give it a try. □



The Families We Invent



FRANK BRUNI
© 2013 New York Times

When they were 11 years old, Kylee and Starr split a stolen Colas and made a wordless pact, pricking their fingers with a cactus needle to let their blood run together. The gesture symbolized the girls' hope - their determination - that their lives would always be joined just as closely. "You had this idea that I'll never forget," Kylee told Starr much later on. "People move places and change careers for their spouses. And you said to me, 'Why can't we do that for our friendship?'" "We didn't get reinforcement for that idea," Starr said. "We got a lot of pats on the head and 'Oh, that's a nice idea, girls, but life happens.'" It does. And often the only people who go the turbulent distance with you, there at almost every critical juncture, are the ones who wear tags like mother or father, sister or brother, husband or wife. They have more motivation and more of an obligation to stick.

But sometimes it works out differently. Kylee and Starr each went on to marry and have kids, but more than 25 years after their pact, when they sat down in 2007 to speak about it, they were living on the same street, sharing the burdens that needed sharing and no more able to envision separate existences than they had been when they

drank that illicit beer. If that's not family - real family - please tell me what is.

I read about them in a new book, "Ties That Bind," which showcases conversations like theirs from the StoryCorps project, an evolving oral history that records pairs of individuals talking about the sacrifices each has made for the other, the favors bestowed, the forgiveness granted. Dave Isay, the founder of StoryCorps, culled about 40 of these encounters for the book, which coincides with the project's 10th anniversary.

A slight majority of the pairs in the book are linked by DNA, marriage or such. They're kin in the conventional sense. But what struck me most forcefully was how many others had found extraordinary, enduring intimacy outside of that context, stretching the definition of family, making clear that it's not just or even chiefly about common genes, common beds.

It's about common needs, common generosity. It's an act of will as much as an accident of birth. That's worth remembering during this merrymaking, reunion-heavy season, when "family" is usually invoked in terms too narrowly traditional. They fail to recognize that former schoolmates, fellow churchgoers, neighbors or other friends can mean every bit as much to you as any actual relatives do. They fail to acknowledge how many people have been let down by those relatives, and have forged a family of their own invention.

That's true of Chelda, who was 24 in 2009, when she and her best friend, Georgia, two years older, recorded the conversation that appears in "Ties That Bind."

"I remember growing up and picturing this fairy-tale life," Chelda said, mentioning two of television's happiest tribes, the Brady bunch and the Huxtables. "But I didn't have the family network that I wanted." She decided that Georgia would

fill the gap. She clung to her. And when she got pregnant unexpectedly during graduate school, it was Georgia who rushed to her side and stayed there. As good as we humans are at division, we're better still at connection. "Ties That Bind" shows this again and again, even presenting the astonishing story of a woman in constant contact with the man who killed her only son and served 17 years behind bars for his crime. At the time of their recorded conversation in 2011, he was out of prison and living next door to her. She was calling him "son." And he was professing his love for her and helping to fill the very hole in her life that he, with a bullet, had created.

"Our relationship is beyond belief," she said.

It certainly didn't follow any predictable script, and neither did the relationship that Tim, a former nurse, has with Barbara, whose husband, a quadriplegic, he once tended to, bringing the couple a crucial comfort. When Tim later developed AIDS, Barbara assumed the role of caregiver and moved him into her home. She spoon-fed him six times a day. They, too, are like mother and child.

In the book there are teachers and students whose closeness transcended and outlasted the classroom. There's a mentally challenged woman, Janice, who has lived for more than a decade with Sadie, the friend who essentially rescued her from a family that used her as an unpaid housekeeper, seldom let her out into the world and went so far as to have her sterilized. The tenderness between the two women is palpable and breathtaking.

"Your house is the White House to me," Janice told Sadie last year, when their conversation was recorded.

"We're not biologically tied," Sadie said. "We are spiritually tied." Lucky for them, lucky for all of us, that twine can be as thick as blood. □

Treats From Their Kitchens To Yours

MELISSA CLARK

© 2013 New York Times

Chocolate bark is the workhorse of homemade holiday gifts: easy, crowd-pleasing, expected.

But you've never seen chocolate bark like Tom Faglon's chocolate bark. Instead of nuts or dried fruit or chopped-up, peppermint candy canes, he scatters fresh pomegranate seeds over the surface, where they glisten like rubies. Chewy bits of candied ginger are hidden inside the bittersweet chocolate, lying in wait to surprise you with their spiciness. Then, to make things even more interesting, he strews the top with crunchy sea salt.

His bark is as sweet and juicy as a box of chocolate-covered cherries, but a lot more sophisticated.

Even better for the busiest time of the year, a pound of it takes less than 10 active minutes to make.

I came across Faglon's recipe as I was poring over the nearly 150 messages that Dining section readers sent to us with their favorite, sweet, homemade holiday gifts. Recipes came in from all over the world. There was an unusual, anise-oat crescent cookie from

Rome. A recipe for chocolate-dipped, marzipan-covered apricots was sent from Paris. From closer to home, Brooklyn, came a farmers'-market-inspired fruit compote.

So I put on my apron and got to work, testing my way through a dozen of the offerings. My methodology for choosing what to test operated on a gut level. If my mouth started to water as I read the recipe, I printed it out.

There were plenty of variations on chocolate bark, but none as intriguing as Faglon's.

Your friends will be thrilled to receive any of these homemade holiday gifts. I know mine will be, too. And we all have you, our readers, to thank.

CHOCOLATE BARK

Adapted from Tom Faglon
Time: 10 minutes, plus chilling

Yield: About 3/4 pound of bark (8 servings)

140 grams dark (bittersweet) chocolate pieces (5 ounces)

20 grams minced crystallized ginger (2 tablespoons)

140 grams fresh pomegranate seeds (1 cup)

6 grams flaky sea salt (1



Chocolate bark with fresh pomegranate seeds, the top strewn with sea salt. Chocolate bark is the workhorse of homemade holiday gifts: easy, crowd-pleasing, expected.

(Andrew Scrivani/The New York Times)

teaspoon)

1. Fit a heatproof bowl over a pot of simmering water, making sure the water doesn't touch the bottom of the bowl. Place the chocolate in the bowl and stir until fully melted, about 5 minutes. Remove the bowl from the pot and stir the crystallized ginger and half of the pomegranate seeds into the melted chocolate.

2. Line a small baking sheet with parchment paper. Pour melted chocolate mixture onto the sheet. Use a spatula to smooth the chocolate into one even layer about 1/4 inch

thick. (It does not need to fill the entire sheet.) Sprinkle chocolate with remaining pomegranate seeds and sea salt.

3. Chill for 20 to 30 minutes or until firm. Break or cut into pieces and store in an airtight container, separating the layers with wax paper. Best served the day it's made; otherwise condensation may form on the surface.

HOLIDAY PRALINES

Adapted from Elizabeth Choinski

Time: 50 minutes

Yield: 2 dozen pieces

400 grams granulated sug-

ar (2 cups)

1/2 cup Steen's cane syrup or light molasses

230 grams pecan halves (2 cups)

4 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 tablespoon vanilla extract

5 grams ground ginger (1 teaspoon)

5 grams ground cinnamon (1 teaspoon)

2 grams ground cloves (1/2 teaspoon)

1. In a saucepan, combine sugar, cane syrup, pecans and 1/2 cup water. Stir over medium heat until sugar dissolves and mixture comes to a boil. Cook, stirring occasionally, until mixture reaches 235 degrees on a candy thermometer.

2. Remove saucepan from heat and immediately stir in butter, vanilla extract and spices. Allow mixture to cool for 10 minutes.

3. Carefully, using a hand-held mixer - or a standing mixer fitted with the paddle attachment - whip until mixture changes to a lighter color and becomes creamy and just starts to stiffen as it cools. (It should still be warm.) The pecans will break up a bit.

4. Use a tablespoon-size cookie-dough scoop to drop mixture onto two baking sheets lined with parchment paper (12 pralines per sheet). Use a spatula to flatten each praline. Let cool completely and store in a tin, creating separate layers with wax paper. □



Pecan pralines spiced with cloves and cinnamon. These sturdy treats would do well mailed across the country, an excellent quality in a homemade gift.

(Andrew Scrivani/The New York Times)